United Nations A/69/180

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 July 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Item 27 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Social development: follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 68/134, entitled "Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing". It focuses on two issues that have been singled out as critical to the well-being and human rights of older persons, namely, addressing age-based discrimination and neglect, and abuse and violence. The report provides updated information on recent major policy developments in the regions, publications and civil society initiatives. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in section V.

* A/69/150.

14-58183 (E) 260814

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/134, entitled "Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing". It focuses on two issues that have been singled out as critical to the well-being and human rights of older persons within the framework of both the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing[1] and the working sessions of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, namely, addressing age-based discrimination and neglect, and abuse and violence.[2]

2. Section II of the report provides an account of the discussion of the issue of age-based discrimination at the first four working sessions of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing held during the period 2011-2013. It describes the evolution of discussions on the centrality of age discrimination, and the related issue of ageism as a roadblock to the full implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The second part of the section summarizes the findings of the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action.[3]

3. In the wake of the growing attention to neglect and abuse of and violence against older women and as a response to General Assembly resolution 67/143, the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, convened the Expert Group Meeting on Neglect, Abuse and Violence of Older Women in New York from 5 to 7 November 2013, and in 2013 issued the publication *Neglect, Abuse and Violence against Older Women*.[4] Section II of the present report provides an overview of the conceptual, policy and societal challenges related to such neglect, abuse and violence, based on the recommendations of the experts and the current state of knowledge presented in the publication.

4. Section IV of the present report provides updated information on recent regional policy developments, publications and civil society initiatives. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in section V.

II. Age-based discrimination

A. Discussions of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

5. Over the past four years, recognition and discussion of the issue of age-based discrimination as an impediment to accelerated progress in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing has grown among Member States and civil society. In its first working session, the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing took stock of the existing international human rights framework, and noted that explicit reference to older persons or to age as a ground for impermissible discrimination was scarce. Only two binding international instruments make such

[1] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Other areas have been identified by the General Assembly in its resolutions 64/132, 65/182, 66/127, 67/139, 67/143 and 68/134.

[3] See also A/64/127, A/65/158, A/66/173, A/67/188 and A/68/167.

[4] United Nations publication ST/ESA/351.

references. The first is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[5] which makes reference to age-appropriate assistance to persons with disabilities in the prevention of discrimination and to increasing access of older persons with disabilities to social protection and poverty reduction programmes. The second is the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,[6] which, in article 7, includes age among the prohibited grounds for discrimination.

6. Several human rights treaties deal with the protection of older persons against discrimination on other grounds, or other status, along with open-ended categories intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. Highly relevant provisions for the protection of human rights and older persons are included in some treaties, while a few set forth specific applicable standards based on generally recognized rights and principles.

7. In its general comment No. 6 (1995),[7] the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights highlighted the need to address discrimination against unemployed older persons, older persons living in poverty and those with unequal access to universal old-age pensions owing to place of residence. Also, under article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[8] the Human Rights Committee held the view that a distinction related to age that is not based on reasonable and objective criteria may amount to discrimination on the ground of other status.[9]

8. Discussions also highlighted that beyond the prohibition of discrimination on the ground of age, human rights mechanisms sometimes identify older persons as a vulnerable group that requires special measures of protection. For example, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes particular situations in which older persons are vulnerable under article 16, which requires age-sensitive assistance and support for persons with disabilities and their families to prevent exploitation, violence and abuse.

9. At the second session of the Working Group, discussions widened to encompass forms of multiple discrimination. It was noted that, against the backdrop of scarce attention within the international human rights framework to discrimination based on age, reference to the forms of multiple discrimination suffered by some older persons was also lacking. Age is a factor that interacts with all forms of discrimination that individuals struggle with throughout their lives, inter alia, discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnicity, disability or health conditions, poverty, living in rural areas, and being divorced or widowed. In this interaction, age intensifies and aggravates existing disadvantages and conditions to create a distinct and compound dimension of discrimination. To date, the specific issue of forms of multiple discrimination in old age has only been addressed in general recommendation No. 27 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/GC/27), which recognizes age as one of the grounds on which women suffer such discrimination.

---

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

[6] Ibid., vol. 2220, No. 39481.

[7] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 2* (E/1996/22), annex IV.

[8] See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[9] Communication No. 983/2001, *Love et al. v. Australia*, Views adopted on 25 March 2003, para. 8.2.

10. The third session of the Working Group proved particularly fruitful; best practices were shared and consideration given to how to build on initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and international levels to address the main causes of protection gaps and age discrimination. Panellists from government and civil society organizations provided insights into the reality of the barriers that older persons face in the enjoyment of their human rights in Australia and Europe, particularly as regards employment, workers' compensation and issues of income protection. Experts from national human rights commissions in Africa attempted to address the specifics of the violations of human rights of older persons. With growing change in the social perception of older persons in Africa, their situation has been largely degraded, from one of being respected and serving as mediators in their communities, to experiencing increasing levels of violence and abuse. Alarmingly, growing reports of incidents of gang rape and murder of older women following accusations of witchcraft were highlighted. During the session, representatives of civil society organizations and networks cautioned that age discrimination and ageism were widely tolerated across the world and that older persons continued to be highly vulnerable to abuse, deprivation and exclusion.

11. At the fourth session of the Open-ended Working Group, attention was drawn to the fact that older persons today were in a similar position to that of persons with disabilities prior to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. During the session, the non-discrimination clauses in existing human rights treaties were revisited and it was noted that the Convention might prove a helpful precedent. Much like older persons, persons with disabilities, prior to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, were also widely considered to be fully protected under existing international human rights norms under the category "other status". The panel noted that the issuance of general comments and more frequent explicit reference to persons with disabilities[10] had not led to more consistent protection of their rights. A report commissioned by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights eight years after the issuance by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of general comment No. 5 revealed that only one half of the State reports to the Committee made reference to measures taken to integrate persons with disabilities and, in the absence of explicit articulation to prohibit disability-based discrimination, many harmful human rights violations continued to occur.[11]

12. A search by keyword of the Universal Human Rights Index database in June 2014 revealed that references to older persons in observations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the reports of State parties and, even more so by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during the period 2009-2013, remained scarce (see table 1). This search also exposed that issues of older persons were mentioned quite randomly, in low numbers, and even then were very context-specific. Under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, older women were primarily referred to as one of several marginalized groups for which limited, if any, information and disaggregated data were available. References to specific issues

[10] For example, general comment No. 5 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[11] *Human Rights and Disability: The Current Use and Future Potential of United Nations Human Rights Instruments in the Context of Disability* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.XIV.6).

include gender-biased pension rights, victims of accusations of witchcraft, denial of rights and discrimination against widows and, recently, the effects of budget austerity. The handful of observations made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in reference to older persons are generally blanket references to older persons as part of a vulnerable group needing social and/or economic assistance.

Table 1

Occurrences of references to old age in observations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during the period 2009-2013

Treaty body	*Year*	*Number of occurrences*
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	2009	8
	2010	21
	2011	14
	2012	6
	2013	14
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	2009	2
	2010	4
	2011	4
	2012	4
	2013	8

Source: Universal Human Rights Index database (http://uhri.ohchr.org); accessed on 10 June 2014.

13. Discussion of discrimination during the fourth session of the Working Group focused on the fact that discriminatory practices arose from prejudicial attitudes towards older persons. One panellist suggested that successfully combating age-based discrimination would rest on addressing ageism and changing the social mindset about ageing and older persons. Civil society representatives noted that ageism manifested itself in both individual and institutional behaviours and decisions that had a significant negative impact on the lives of older persons, contributing to the marginalization and social exclusion of older persons.

B. Second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

14. The report of the Secretary-General to the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-second session (E/CN.5/2014/4) on the further appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action highlighted the view that progress in

fighting sectorial age discrimination would be limited as long as ageism was not recognized and addressed.

15. Countries members of the Economic Commission for Europe reported the importance of ensuring equal treatment and non-discrimination based on age in employment, while those at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific revealed that age discrimination was one of the main obstacles that impeded older persons in gaining and retaining jobs. Members of the Economic Commission for Africa identified age discrimination as one of the major human rights challenges to older persons in the region, while members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, at their second regional review meeting, recommended the establishment of mechanisms to protect older persons from all forms of discrimination. States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the other hand, adopted a more systematic approach to addressing discrimination by putting forward an age equality agenda.

16. Against such a background, the Commission for Social Development, at its fifty-second session, adopted a resolution in which it was recognized for the first time that ageism was a widely prevalent and prejudicial attitude that might rest on the assumption that neglect of and discrimination against older persons was acceptable, and that it was the common source of, the justification for and the driving force behind age discrimination.[12]

17. Following the conclusion of the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, it was noted that, while national legislative action against age discrimination had largely focused on the workplace, there was nevertheless a growing body of evidence that old-age discrimination was prevalent beyond the realm of employment (see A/65/157, A/67/188, A/68/167 and E/CN.5/2014/4). Older persons suffered from discrimination in other key development areas such as health, education, access to insurance and financial services. Also highlighted were challenges to the implementation of existing policy, and pioneer legislative responses such as the United States Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and European Union Directive 2000/78/EC.

18. While recent estimates confirm a steady increase in labour force participation rates of older men and women aged between 55 and 64 years in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and North America, older workers continue to face obstacles in obtaining and retaining jobs. They often suffer from discriminatory attitudes in recruitment and the workplace, and are sometimes confronted with age thresholds that apply to compensation, income insurance and essential professional licensing. Older persons also suffer from discrimination in access to health-care services that are appropriate, affordable and of good quality. There continues to be a lack of age-friendly health-care guiding principles that build on increased life expectancy and emerging disease patterns and that also include effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Preconceived notions and negative attitudes of some medical staff and caregivers towards older persons contribute to an ageist approach to patient assessment, diagnosis and treatment options.

19. While discussion of age-related discrimination across the world has increased, there continues to be no legal protection for equality and non-discrimination on the

[12] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2014, Supplement No. 6* (E/2014/26), chap. I, sect. B, draft resolution V.

basis of age beyond employment and occupation, as documented in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session (A/67/188). Access to insurance and financial services has only recently received attention at the decision-making level, despite persistent age limits in access to bank loans, mortgages, complementary health insurance and travel insurance. In some instances, excess surcharges and cancellation penalties are applied to travellers aged 65 years and over. While numerous cases of age discrimination in these areas abound, examples of best practice have been identified in Sweden, where protection against age discrimination was strengthened in the areas of social protection, health care, access to goods and services and working life through the Swedish Discrimination Act in 2013. Similarly, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has banned unjustifiable age discrimination in the provision of goods and services as of October 2012 under the 2010 Equality Act, and age limits to accessing complementary health insurance have been lifted in Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom. In less developed countries, age discrimination in accessing financial services is a widespread reality. Older persons, who are predominantly engaged in the informal and rural sectors, are excluded from access to small business loans and microfinance services because of their age. Such practices adversely affect the rights of older persons to decent housing and income security. Older women are especially vulnerable, given the additional hurdle of discriminatory gender-based laws and customs that apply to property and inheritance.

20. Whereas there is agreement among Member States on the need to promote and protect the rights of older persons, recognition of the need to clearly articulate the notion of age discrimination at the national level is lagging. The invisibility and lack of explicit reference to discrimination on the basis of age in national policies and legislation have a detrimental effect on efforts to ensure consistent protection of the rights of older persons, a fact explicitly recognized by the Council of Europe in recommendation CM/Rec(2014)2 of the Committee of Ministers, concerning the promotion of the human rights of older persons.

21. The above-mentioned recommendation, albeit non-binding, is the first European instrument that deals specifically with the human rights of older persons.

III. Neglect, abuse and violence against older women

22. In 2012, the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action showed that abuse and violence against older persons had become a growing concern for Member States in all regions, regardless of their level of development (A/68/167). The findings drew specific attention to the abuse and violence directed at older women accused of witchcraft in a number of African and some Asian countries, as well as the financial abuse faced by women in terms of lacking assets owing to discriminatory property and inheritance law.

23. In the wake of the growing attention to these issues, the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/143, organized the Expert Group Meeting on Neglect, Abuse and Violence of Older Women, which was held from 5 to 7 November 2013, and in 2013 issued the publication *Neglect, Abuse and Violence against Older Women*.[4]

24. The Expert Group Meeting focused on the conceptual, policy and societal challenges related to neglect, abuse and violence against older women. Recommendations provided by the experts stressed the need for an informed and comprehensive response to the problem by enhancing research; clarifying what constitutes neglect, violence and abuse of older women; achieving a clearer understanding of the risk factors; adopting a women-centred approach to prevention and protection efforts; and increasing awareness-raising initiatives at the global, regional, national and community levels.

25. The above-mentioned publication, *Neglect, Abuse and Violence against Older Women*, presents an overview of the current state of knowledge of the main forms of abuse, the risk factors and the consequences for health, and discusses the prevalence of the different forms of abuse and the sources of data. It also gives an account of some of the main preventive measures for addressing such neglect, violence and abuse.

26. It is critical to view the abuse of older women not just within the context of the demographics of ageing where women outnumber men, but in the context of a life-course of discrimination, oppression and abuse. Violence against women is rooted in historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men and occurs in every country, and gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.[13] However, neglect and abuse of, and violence against, older women are often not acknowledged or recognized.

27. Neglect, abuse and violence against older women often go undetected. The issue is still a hidden problem owing to various factors, such as underreporting and the refusal of societies to admit the existence of such mistreatment. As a consequence, there is limited knowledge of its actual extent.[14]

A. Breadth of the issues covered under neglect, abuse and violence

28. The main forms of mistreatment of older persons include neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, verbal and non-physical abuse, and financial abuse or exploitation.[15]

29. Neglect is the failure to meet an older individual's needs by: (a) not providing adequate food, clean clothing, a safe and comfortable place to live, good health care and personal hygiene; (b) denying the person social contact; (c) not providing assistive devices, if needed; and (d) failing to prevent physical harm and to provide needed support. Neglect can also be associated with confinement and inappropriately heavy use of medication. Indicators of neglect include a range of physical symptoms of poor well-being.

30. Physical abuse refers to single acts that may be repetitive, or to enduring acts of such abuse. Enduring acts include inappropriate restraint or confinement, which

[13] Paragraph 10 of the agreed conclusions of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 7* (E/2013/27), chap. I, sect. A).

[14] Economic Commission for Europe, *Policy Brief on Ageing No. 14*, October 2013.

[15] See the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Abuse of older persons: recognizing and responding to abuse of older persons in a global context" (E/CN.5/2002/PC/2) and *Neglect, Abuse and Violence against Women* (United Nations publication ST/ESA/351).

cause pain or bodily harm. The consequences of physical abuse include physical indicators of abuse and visible psychological manifestations, such as diminished mobility, confusion and other altered behaviour.

31. Sexual abuse is non-consensual sexual contact that ranges from indecent assault and sexual harassment by caretakers to violent rape.

32. Psychological abuse represents the largest category of abuse against older persons and ranges from denigrating comments to controlling behaviour by the perpetrator, leading to diminished identity, dignity and self-worth. Indicators of psychological abuse can include severe psychological manifestations, including fear, a poor ability to make decisions, apathy, withdrawal and depression.

33. Financial abuse includes, among others, the misuse or use of money or property without knowledge or consent and to the disadvantage of a person; health-care fraud; forging or forcing signatures; abuse of power of attorney; misappropriation of funds from pensions; reverse mortgage fraud; and identity theft.

34. Self-neglect does not involve a perpetrator but refers to older persons who, wilfully or inadvertently, owing to diminished capacity or mental impairment, neglect to meet their own basic needs and often refuse the assistance offered by others.

35. Studies indicate that more women than men are victims of neglect, abuse and violence. Research into crimes of maltreatment against older people within the family carried out in 10 European countries suggests that women constitute 60 to 75 per cent of victims.[16]

36. Perpetrators of violence and abuse against older persons are often family members, friends and acquaintances and/or individuals who are emotionally or financially dependent on the victim. Abusers can also include strangers who prey on older persons or commercial organizations that defraud older clients.

37. Abuse occurs in different settings, such as domestic settings, nursing homes, social care institutions, hospitals, medical centres, home-care services and prisons, as well as in everyday life situations.

38. Domestic abuse entails abuse by a family member, frequently the primary caregiver. Experts agree that domestic abuse is largely hidden, is not easily recognized and is significantly underreported. Institutional abuse of all forms has long been associated with long-term institutional care. The deficiencies of a care system, including poorly trained and overworked staff, poor resident management, such as excessive regimentation or overprotection, and dilapidated facilities, can render interaction between staff and residents difficult, which can result in abusive, neglectful and exploitative behaviours.

B. Care settings

39. A substantial part of neglect, abuse and violence occurs in formal care settings. Incidents of physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse identified include the use of restraints, forced locking of doors, social isolation and separation, inadequate

[16] World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, *European Report on Preventing Elder Maltreatment* (Copenhagen, 2011). Available at www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/healthy-ageing/publications/2011/european-report-on-preventing-elder-maltreatment.

standards and service delivery, covert or inappropriate use of medication, malnutrition, and lack of proportionality with regard to autonomy and harm minimization.[17]

40. Member States have pursued a variety of legislative, policy and programmatic approaches that address or partially address, if at all, various types of neglect, abuse and violence. While a number of countries have taken steps towards broadening the scope of existing programmes and legislation aimed at protection from violence to explicitly address abuse in domestic settings, progress towards protection from neglect, violence and abuse in care facilities has been very uneven. Such care facilities are, by and large, subject to limited, if any, oversight in terms of standards of quality of care and the rights of older persons.

41. In some countries, awareness of abuse of older persons and changing social policy have led to the enactments of new legislation to criminalize the abuse of older persons. Mechanisms may include the adoption of charters of rights and responsibilities of residents and care and/or service providers. However, in countries in which legislation to protect older persons from abuse exists, application of the legislation is far from being systematic.[16]

C. Fragmented approaches, gender, and cultural and societal contexts

42. The impact of neglect, abuse and violence on victims is severe, ranging from a deterioration of conditions of general health, long-lasting emotional consequences and the threat to life in cases of failure to provide for such basic needs as medication, nutrition and heating. These considerations represent a multiplicity of the forms and consequences of violence against older women. The problem is one of social, public health and human rights issues and therefore requires multifaceted strategies.

43. Notwithstanding efforts to address abuse, violence and neglect, approaches to combat the problem remain fragmented across regions and Member States. There is no theoretical framework for defining the phenomenon. The majority of academic research has been conducted in developed countries and no agreement on terminology and meanings has so far been reached. The perceptions and opinions of older persons are crucial in defining abuse, its identification and means of intervention. For a long time, elder abuse theories have ignored the views and perceptions of older persons themselves. Furthermore, existing definitions and approaches are largely gender-blind, which may explain the lack of attention to older women when addressing violence against women.

44. Neglect, abuse and violence have cultural, ethnic and religious dimensions. The definitions and approaches, however, are often detached from the cultural context. In some societies, older widows are subject to abandonment, property grabbing, sexual violence, forced marriages and accusations of witchcraft.[18] Some

[17] See, for example, Kieren Fitzpatrick, "Violence and abuse against older persons", presentation made at the second session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, 1-4 August 2011. Available from http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/secpanelstatement.shtml.

[18] WHO and International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, *Missing Voices: Views of Older Persons on Elder Abuse* (Geneva, WHO, 2002). Available at http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/WHO_NMH_VIP_02.1.pdf?ua=1.

of these harmful practices were reported to occur in a number of Member States in Africa and Asia. Accusations of witchcraft, used as an excuse to justify extreme violence against older women, were reported to have taken place in other African countries and in some Member States in Asia.[19] Civil society organizations report that such accusations are used to justify extreme violence against older women in 41 countries. Acts of violence, as well as customs embedded in social structures, need to be considered in the broad context of elder abuse and a human rights approach.

D. Lack of data: the age definition conundrum

45. Comprehensive national and international data on older women's experiences of neglect, violence and abuse are essential for both the development and monitoring of evidence-based policies to combat the issue and for measuring the effectiveness of current legislation, policy interventions and interventions by practitioners. Most studies on violence against women survey only women under the age of 50 years, omitting older women altogether.[20] Studies that are based on disaggregated data by age and gender use a wide diversity of definitions of older age, starting as low as 30 years of age, to 40 or 45, 50 or 55, and up to 65 or 66 years. A recent study by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights[21] excluded women older than 74 from interviews and limited the scope of research to domestic violence.

46. This situation is a reflection of the lack of an agreed definition of what constitutes violence against older women and, hence, lack of technical recommendations for data collection, particularly in the context of mainstream collection of data on violence against women.

E. Underreporting and patterns of reporting

47. Research suggests that incidents of neglect, abuse and violence remain significantly underreported by the victims, by as much as 80 per cent according to WHO.[22] Mention of neglect, violence and abuse is avoided by many older women out of fear of exposing a perpetrator or a family member, losing services or being placed in a nursing home against their will. Other factors that cause underreporting by victims are low confidence; absence of a confidante; financial, physical or psychological dependence on the abuser; and fear of consequences. In addition, detection of abuse among people with limited or reduced capacity as a result of factors such as Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia may be more complicated by the difficulty they have in articulating the need for support.

---

[19] Silvia Perel-Levin, "Abuse, neglect and violence against older persons", presentation made to the Social Forum, Geneva, 2 April 2014. Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/SForum/Pages/StatementsSForum2014.aspx.

[20] Claudia García-Moreno and others, "WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses" (WHO, Geneva, 2005). Available from www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/.

[21] *Violence against Women: An EU-Wide Study* (Vienna, 2014). Available at http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results_en.pdf.

[22] WHO, *A Global Response to Elder Abuse and Neglect: Building Primary Health Care Capacity to Deal with the Problem Worldwide* (Geneva, 2008). Available at www.who.int/ageing/publications/ELDER_DocAugust08.pdf.

48. According to a survey carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights,[23] only one in three victims of partner violence and one in four victims of non-partner violence report their most recent serious incident. Victims of partner violence often experience several incidents of abuse by the partner before they report an incident. It has been suggested that further study of patterns of non-reporting, as well as the behaviour of perpetrators, may offer insights as to how to encourage reporting, improve responses to women as victims and ensure that sufficient resources are available for targeted victim support.

49. Reporting patterns of neglect, abuse and violence vary among Member States. Research carried out in the States members of the European Union reveal that variations in prevalence rates for violence against women, including older women, at the country level can be explained by the level of cultural acceptance of talking about experiences; gender inequality, leading to the levels of disclosure; and the exposure of risk factors such as employment, socialization and lifestyle patterns. Exploring the variations in crime levels among countries and assessing behavioural aspects can add to the understanding of the different levels of violence reported.[23]

F. Risk factors

50. Reliable national and international data would also allow for a better identification of risk factors.

51. Age and gender are two major risk factors for abuse, while care dependency is an additional risk factor for neglect. Different theoretical frameworks emphasize varying risk factors, such as stress associated with caring for an older person; dependency; intergenerational transmission of violence; and inter-familial violence.

52. At the individual level, evidence indicates that mental health, in particular dementia, is a significant risk factor in becoming a victim of neglect, abuse and violence.[16] Risk factors also include the dependence of the perpetrator on the victim, whereas social isolation is a risk factor at the community level. Mental health problems, previous violent behaviours and substance misuse are main risk factors for perpetrators.[16] Risk factors for financial abuse can vary from borrowing a future inheritance, as reported in African and Asian countries, to situations in which adult children register their parents in retirement homes to gain control over their affairs, finances and property, as reported in European countries.[24]

53. At the societal level, cultural and attitudinal factors approving the use of violence, ageism and sexism, particularly cultural values and social systems, may also disadvantage older women. Risk factors differ from region to region and vary depending on the type of abuse. In Africa, poverty is a key factor for the mistreatment of women in general. In Asia, experts report that the growing informal economy and rising unemployment rates impact on older women, making them vulnerable to poverty; this applies especially to those residing in rural areas where access to transportation, water resources and health care is limited or absent. There have also been reports of cases where older women were forced out of their homes and from their land to enable urban expansion.[24] In some instances, immigrant

[23] *Violence against Women: An EU-Wide Study*. The study was based on face-to-face interviews with 42,000 women, including women up to the age of 74 years.

[24] Expert Group Meeting on Neglect, Violence and Abuse, New York, 5-7 November 2013.

populations of older women are particularly at risk of neglect, abuse and violence owing to communication barriers.[14]

G. Prevention strategies and recommendations

54. So far, the variety of research findings has made it difficult to formulate coherent, evidence-based policies and targeted intervention programmes and to allocate resources.[15] No nationally uniform response systems and/or strategies are in place to date. Different sets of prevention programmes and initiatives exist across sectors and can be found within the health and mental health areas, often in the form of training of workers in health, institutional or care settings, and in the social service, criminal justice and housing sectors.[16] These initiatives may not target older women specifically but they constitute part of a broader campaign to prevent intimate partner violence, domestic violence and ageism, or to promote community health.

55. While some Member States have begun to address the problem, a more harmonized and uniform approach to the prevention of abuse and protection of older women at the national and local levels, as well as throughout the United Nations system, is needed. In this context, the need to broaden the current knowledge base and to take steps towards drafting global definitions and guidelines are critical.

IV. Updated information on major recent regional policy developments, civil society initiatives and publications

A. Regional policy developments

56. As mentioned in paragraph 20 above, the Council of Europe adopted, in February 2014, a non-binding recommendation on the rights of older persons, which is grounded in existing provisions such as the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Social Charter. The preamble of the recommendation notes that existing international human rights standards apply to persons at all stages of life and form an adequate normative framework for the protection of the human rights of older persons, and that additional efforts are needed, however, to address protection gaps from insufficient implementation of existing laws.

57. The recommendation covers the areas of non-discrimination, autonomy and participation in decision-making, protection against violence and abuse, social protection and employment, appropriate and affordable health care and access to justice, which includes the conditions of detention. The recommendation also provides illustrations of good practice, some based on legislation and others on policy and programmes.

58. In addition to the cited examples of the legislative action taken to prevent age discrimination in several European Union countries, such as the United Kingdom and Sweden, the recommendation also covers protection from abuse and violence in all settings and calls upon member States to focus on awareness-raising measures to protect older persons from financial abuse, including deception and fraud. Also stressed is the need for measures to raise awareness among personnel and informal carers in order to detect and report instances of abuse, to carry out effective

investigations of claims of violence and abuse and to provide appropriate help and support to victims. Examples of good practice cited include the establishment in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland and France of helplines to report abuse; individual criminal background checks in the United Kingdom for employers and volunteer organizations to screen individuals prior to their work with older persons; and various awareness-raising campaigns, protocols, guidelines and training programmes to help people recognize and/or prevent instances of abuse.

59. In the area of autonomy and participation, the recommendation addresses issues surrounding autonomous decision-making, such as legal capacity, protective measures and respect for dignity and privacy. Among the recent good practices cited are the implementation and/or adoption by Belgium and the Czech Republic in 2014 of new legislation that reforms restrictions to legal capacity, allowing older persons to benefit from assistance or representation.

60. The African Union Conference of Ministers of Social Development, at its fourth session held in Addis Ababa in May 2014, approved the draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, concerning the rights of older persons in Africa, which will be forwarded to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union for adoption and signature. The Protocol would see States parties include in national law the United Nations Principles on Older Persons,[25] which deal with independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity, and ensure that they become legally binding as the basis for protecting the rights of older persons. Articles of the Protocol cover, inter alia, the elimination of discrimination, access to justice and equal protection before the law, the right to make decisions, protection against discrimination in employment, social protection, protection from abuse and harmful traditional practices, protection of older women, care and support, residential care, support for the care of vulnerable children, protection of older persons with disabilities, protection of older persons in situations of conflict and disaster, access to health services, access to education and information, participation in programmes and recreational activities, access to infrastructure, and access to credit.

B. *World Social Protection Report 2014/15*

61. The *World Social Protection Report 2014/15*, published by the International Labour Organization in June 2014, contains a chapter on social protection for older women and men.[26] The report emphasizes that social protection plays an increasing role in ensuring income security in old age in many countries. Worldwide, 51.5 per cent of the population above the statutory pensionable age were in receipt of an old-age pension in 2010/12. However, significant discrepancies continue to exist in coverage in the developing world. Coverage is the highest in Latin America and Asia, where 56.1 per cent and 47.0 per cent of older persons received an old age pension, respectively. Coverage remains significantly lower in North Africa (36.7 per cent), the Middle East (29.5 per cent) and even more so in sub-Saharan Africa (16.9 per cent).

[25] General Assembly resolution 46/91, annex.

[26] International Labour Organization, *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building Economic Recovery, Inclusive Development and Social Justice* (Geneva, 2014), chap. 4.

62. Recent progress is reflected in the increase in the number of countries that have reached coverage of more than 90 per cent of the population above statutory pensionable age: 45 countries in 2010/12, up from 34 in 2000. Also, the number of countries where less than 20 per cent of the older population received a pension decreased from 73 to 57 between 2000 and 2010/12.

63. According to the report, coverage rates for contributory schemes are lower, often significantly so, for women than for men, a situation that results from women's lower labour force participation, the large number of women working as self-employed or unpaid family workers, and the fact that women have shorter and interrupted careers. On the positive side, the report notes that discriminatory provisions, such as statutory pensionable ages that are lower for women than for men, are in the process of being eliminated — although it remains the case in 52 countries[27] — while more countries are crediting pension accounts during maternity and parental leave.

64. The report also stresses that income security in old age depends on the accessibility and affordability of such social services as health care and long-term care. Besides ensuring good health, access to health care plays a critical role in protecting older persons against health-related poverty.

65. While acknowledging the progress made during the first decade of the present century, the report cautions that while nearly one half of the world's population over pensionable age currently receive a pension, pension levels for those who do receive one often fall short of providing income security. The report also notes that, under existing provisions, only 42 per cent of the working population may expect to receive an old-age pension in the future.

66. The findings of the report suggest that, without addressing the issue of expanded and adequate old-age income security and related social and health services for older persons, the post-2015 sustainable development goals aimed at reducing or eliminating poverty will remain elusive and there could in fact be a rise in poverty rates among the growing numbers of older persons in all parts of the world.

C. Palliative care

67. On 24 May 2014, the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA67.19, on strengthening of palliative care as a component of comprehensive care throughout the life course. In the resolution, the first on the topic, the World Health Assembly recognized that palliative care is fundamental to improving the quality of life, well-being, comfort and human dignity of patients and, inter alia, foresaw the increased need for palliative care with ageing populations and the rise of non-communicable and other chronic diseases worldwide. The Assembly also acknowledged the current limited availability of palliative care services in much of the world and urged Member States to implement and monitor cost-effective and equitable palliative care actions with emphasis on primary care, community and home-based care, and universal coverage schemes.[28]

[27] Ibid., annex IV, table B.6.

[28] The issue of palliative care as a public health and human rights issue was discussed at the sessions of the Open-ended Working Group in 2012 and 2013 and in the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-second session (E/CN.5/2014/4), under the heading "Emerging challenges in the provision of health care".

D. Development in measuring the well-being of older persons

68. The lack of age-disaggregated data to measure the social and economic well-being of older persons has long been considered a main reason for the lack of attention to and knowledge of the life circumstances of older persons within the framework of national development strategies and programmes in developing countries. Against this background, HelpAge International, with the financial support of the United Nations Population Fund, has engaged in the construction of the Global Age Watch Index. The Index, launched on the International Day of Older Persons in 2013, is aimed at providing policymakers and other stakeholders with policy-oriented research and analysis tools that will also facilitate cross-national comparison. The Index attempts to capture the core challenges presented by an ageing population, from ensuring income security and good health care to fighting age-based discrimination. The statistical indicators included in the Index were assembled from internationally comparable data sources and largely reflect the views of older persons themselves on well-being, coping capacity or enabling features of communities (see table 2). HelpAge has been able to compile data for 91 countries to date and plans to monitor progress and expand the Index, as and when more data become available.

Table 2
Global Age Watch Index domains and indicators

Domain	*Indicators*
Income security	Pension coverage Poverty rate in old age Consumption/income of the population 60 years and over as a share of the total population consumption/income
Health status	Life expectancy and health life expectancy at age 60 Self-assessed mental health
Education	Percentage of the population aged 60+ with secondary or higher education
Enabling environment	Existing social support network (family, friends) Feeling safe at night Sense of civic freedom Level of satisfaction with public transportation

Source: HelpAge International, Global Age Watch Index 2013.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

69. While some Member States have begun to address neglect, violence and abuse against older persons, and in particular older women, a more harmonized and universal approach to abuse prevention and protection of older women is needed. Broadening the current knowledge base and taking steps towards drafting global definitions and guidelines have been identified as critical by experts and

practitioners. Equally important is for Member States to introduce and implement comprehensive measures to prevent and respond to neglect, violence and abuse against older persons and to make violence against older women an integral part of the combating violence against women agenda.

70. The lack of explicit reference to age in anti-discrimination instruments and legislation, be it at the international or national level, has been identified as undermining the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons. Addressing the specifics of age-related discrimination beyond employment and occupation, as well as the forms of multiple discrimination directed towards older persons, should also be considered a priority.

71. The General Assembly may wish to recommend that Member States:

(a) **Consider developing an explicit reference and policy framework for addressing neglect, violence and abuse against older persons;**

(b) **Make violence against older women an integral part of the global campaign on violence against women;**

(c) **Make explicit reference to age in their national anti-discrimination legislation and take effective measures to prevent forms of multiple discrimination against older persons.**

United Nations A/69/181

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 July 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Item 83 of the provisional agenda*
The rule of law at the national and international levels

Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/116. It highlights United Nations rule of law activities, and developments, at the national and international levels over the past year, and includes illustrative examples of the broad range of work covered by the United Nations entities that are members of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group. It contains information on the implementation of measures to enhance the coordination and coherence of the work of the United Nations relating to the rule of law. It also includes a section devoted to United Nations activities to enhance access to justice, in view of the General Assembly's focus during its sixty-ninth session on the subtopic "Sharing States' national practices in strengthening the rule of law through access to justice".

* A/69/150.

14-58175 (E) 150814

Please recycle

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Promotion of the rule of law at the international level	3
	A. Codification, development and promotion of an international framework of norms and standards	3
	B. International courts and tribunals	5
	C. International and hybrid criminal courts and tribunals	5
	D. Non-judicial and Security Council accountability and support mechanisms	6
III.	United Nations support to the rule of law at the national level	7
	A. Rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations	7
	B. Rule of law for sustainable development	11
	C. Support to constitution-making initiatives	15
	D. Access to justice	16
IV.	System-wide coordination and coherence	18
	A. Strengthening of coordination and coherence at Headquarters	19
	B. Headquarters support to country-level requests: global focal point	19
	C. Country-level rule of law arrangements	20
	D. Strengthening the rule of law in the Organization	21

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/116. It includes information on the work of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, its members, and the Rule of Law Unit. The report includes a section highlighting United Nations activities to enhance access to justice, in view of the General Assembly's focus during its sixty-ninth session on the subtopic "Sharing States' national practices in strengthening the rule of law through access to justice".

II. Promotion of the rule of law at the international level

2. International law, anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, is the very foundation of the Organization. Promoting its development and respect for international obligations has always been a core aspect of United Nations activities. Efforts in this sphere include encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification, support to the growing network of international treaties, international dispute resolution mechanisms, and training and education in international law. These efforts are based on the core values and principles of the United Nations, and contribute significantly to the collective international efforts to maintain international peace and security, promote human rights and foster sustainable development.

A. Codification, development and promotion of an international framework of norms and standards

3. The United Nations continues to be instrumental in the development and promotion of international norms and standards. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure entered into force on 14 April 2014. It enables the submission of individual complaints to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. To date, this Optional Protocol has been ratified by 11 States. Two additional States ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

4. The Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted on 10 October 2013 and opened for signature. It aims at protecting human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury. Twenty States have consented to be bound to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is promoting additional ratifications to ensure its prompt entry into force.

5. An additional State became party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The number of parties to that instrument continues to grow and is reflective of the universal character of the Convention. One State also became party to the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention. Four States became parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

6. Three States became parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; three States became parties to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; one State became party to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and six States and one regional economic integration organization became parties to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. There were 29 additional ratifications to the international instruments against terrorism. Four States acceded to the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and four became parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

7. There were three accessions to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and six to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, bringing to 32 the total number of accessions to the statelessness conventions since 2011. Five States newly acceded to or ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

8. In July 2014, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) approved the draft convention on transparency in treaty-based investor-State arbitration and transmitted it for adoption by the General Assembly. The Convention aims to facilitate application to existing investment treaties of the UNCITRAL Rules on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration adopted in 2013. Since 1 April 2014, the Secretary-General has assumed the role of transparency repository in accordance with article 8 of the Rules on Transparency.

9. The UNCITRAL secretariat has continued to support States in harmonizing the application of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods through reconsideration and revision, where appropriate, of declarations to the Convention. Two States withdrew their declarations and one acceded to the Convention; one State ratified the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Carriage of Goods Wholly or Partly by Sea, and one State acceded to and one State accepted the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts.

10. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted general recommendation No. 35 on combating racist hate speech, which sets out the criteria for declaring ideas based on racial superiority or hatred an offence punishable by law and places the obligation to combat racist hate speech in the context of the protection of other rights, including freedom of expression. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted general recommendation No. 30, which clarifies the scope of the obligation to uphold women's rights before, during and after conflict, and stresses accountability for crimes against women. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted general comments Nos. 1 and 2. The first, on equal recognition before the law, reaffirms the legal capacity of persons with disabilities. It calls upon States parties to replace systems of substitute decision-making by systems in which persons with disabilities are supported in the exercise of their legal capacity and their will and preferences. General comment No. 2 reaffirms that accessibility is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently, to participate fully and equally in society, and to have unrestricted enjoyment of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted general comments Nos. 14

and 16. The first identified criteria for assessing the child's best interests and procedural safeguards to guarantee their implementation. The second provides guidance to ensure that business operations and activities do not adversely affect child rights.

B. International courts and tribunals

11. Peaceful settlement of international disputes is one of the key elements of the rule of law at the international level. The International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, plays the leading role in this area. As at 18 July 2014, there were 13 cases in the List of the Court. During the past year the Court delivered two judgments. The Secretary-General's campaign to broaden the jurisdiction of the Court is ongoing, and the Office of Legal Affairs continues to promote the special role of the Court in international dispute resolution.

12. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea handled four cases addressing a range of issues that included obligations and responsibilities for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities, requests for the release of detained vessels and crew, claims for damages arising out of the arrest of vessels and provisional measures. As of May 2014, it had one request for an advisory opinion on its docket.

13. Several arbitral tribunals established under annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea dealt with a number of issues including maritime boundary delimitation, marine protected areas, maritime jurisdiction, and boarding and detention of vessels, with the Permanent Court of Arbitration acting as the Registry for some of them.

C. International and hybrid criminal courts and tribunals

14. There are currently 122 States parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Seventeen of them have ratified the amendment to article 8 on war crimes, while 14 have ratified the amendment on the crime of aggression. The United Nations continues to cooperate with the Court, in particular by providing logistical support to its field operations and information and evidence in response to requests from the Prosecutor and defence counsel. October 2014 will mark the tenth year since the entry into force of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Court.

15. The Court issued its third judgment, sentencing Germain Katanga to 12 years in prison for his role in the crimes in Bogoro, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which were found to have been committed with particular cruelty and resulted in numerous civilian victims. The United Nations disclosed a considerable body of information for use in the trial. United Nations peacekeeping operations continued to assist the Court with respect to its investigations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

16. The Special Court for Sierra Leone delivered its final appeal judgement in the case of the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, who was convicted for planning, aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity, including child recruitment. Upon the closure of the Special Court on 31 December 2013, the

Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone commenced residual functions, including sentence enforcement, witness protection and preservation of archives. It will be important for Member States to continue to support the Residual Special Court financially so that it can carry out its work.

17. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has completed all its trials and is now only hearing appeals. It has referred several cases to Rwanda for prosecution. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia continues to conduct both major trials and appeals. Since 1 July 2013, both branches of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals have been fully operational. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has been providing support to both Tribunals on legacy projects to document lessons learned on the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence.

18. Judgement in the trial of the first phase of the landmark second case before the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia is expected soon. In the third and fourth cases, judicial investigations continue. In March 2014, the General Assembly granted the Secretary-General, as an exceptional measure, commitment authority for the year 2014 to cover any financial shortfalls arising for the international component. Both national and international components of the Extraordinary Chambers continue to require sustained commitment by way of voluntary contributions to ensure their ability to complete the remaining proceedings.

19. The Special Tribunal for Lebanon commenced its trial in absentia of four persons indicted for the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafiq Hariri. Subsequent to commencement of trial, the Tribunal joined a fifth accused to the case.

D. Non-judicial and Security Council accountability and support mechanisms

20. Commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions established by national and international bodies make critical contributions by providing independent, factual accounts of events to inform international action and to establish accountability for serious human rights violations. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided support to the commissions of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to investigate allegations of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. In Mali and the Central African Republic, OHCHR carried out fact-finding missions to map gross human rights violations and present reports to the Human Rights Council with recommendations. UN-Women is supporting a roster of justice experts in sexual and gender-based violence through training and deployment. Experts have been deployed to a number of investigative bodies including the commissions of inquiry for Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the fact-finding mission to the Central African Republic. In addition, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict facilitated the deployment of child protection expertise in the fact-finding mission to the Central African Republic in 2013.

21. The monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict established by Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) has been an important tool for the protection of children in armed conflict. One action plan to end the recruitment and use of children was signed with Yemen, and plans were implemented in seven countries: Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, the Philippines, Somalia and South Sudan. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict continued to provide guidance and technical support for their implementation. With the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization, they launched a guidance note on monitoring and reporting attacks on schools and hospitals.

22. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1960 (2010), parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of sexual violence were identified in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, to further assist in addressing rule of law issues in conflict contexts, women protection advisers were deployed to the Central African Republic, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan.

III. United Nations support to the rule of law at the national level

A. Rule of law in conflict and post-conflict situations

23. Conflict and post-conflict situations require the progressive restoration of the rule of law, including security institutions capable of protecting the lives and rights of all persons, as well as the functioning of justice systems that address serious violations of human rights and provide redress to victims. Rule of law assistance in conflict and post-conflict settings needs to be tailored and sequenced to respond to specific national contexts and priorities.

Justice systems

24. The strengthening of capacities of national authorities is essential to ensure the sustainability of international support. With a focus on peace, security and stability, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provides support to address immediate gaps, extend State authority and strengthen justice systems in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan. For example, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic is focusing its efforts on re-establishing the criminal justice system in that country, including through the adoption of urgent temporary measures to support authorities in ending impunity and bringing perpetrators of serious crimes to justice. To guide its work in the field, the Department developed a Handbook for Judicial Affairs Officers in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. In Timor-Leste, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to support a capable, modern justice system. Since March 2013, national judges have handled the majority of civil cases which were previously the responsibility of

international personnel. In Guatemala, UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN-Women, with the financial support of the Peacebuilding Fund, are working with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the National Civil Police to enhance their capacity to look at broader criminal phenomena and dismantle criminal networks. Progress in this area has resulted in a decrease in impunity rates for homicide, from 95 per cent in 2010 to 72 per cent in 2013, as well as in convictions in high profile cases of international crimes and human rights violations.

Security sector

25. Security sector reform aims at improving safety through enhancing the effectiveness and accountability of security institutions controlled by civilians and operating according to human rights and the rule of law. The United Nations Mission in Liberia is assisting in strengthening the oversight, accountability, management and financial sustainability of the security sector there, while the Peacebuilding Commission is supporting the establishment of five regional justice and security hubs, with financial support from the Peacebuilding Fund. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali is assisting in the development of a strategy to rebuild the security sector in that country, and is coordinating the international community's support in the field. In Myanmar, UNDP and UNODC are supporting police reform and discussions on security sector governance. In El Salvador, UNDP support contributed to a significant decrease in violence in some of the most dangerous cities of the country.

Police

26. United Nations police support the reform, restructuring and rebuilding of domestic police services and other law enforcement agencies. Most recently, standing police capacity officers have deployed to the Central African Republic, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations, along with international stakeholders, supported the implementation of the national police reform plan, including the revision of the legal framework and training for police officers, as well as introducing community-oriented policing in pilot areas. In Haiti, United Nations police supported the professionalization of personnel, reinforcement of operational capacities, and strengthening of institutional capacity. As part of the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Police Peacekeeping, which aims to ensure cohesion and coherence in United Nations policing, United Nations police are finalizing operational guidance on capacity-building, operations and administration.

Corrections

27. Prison systems need to provide for reliable implementation of judicial decisions in conformity with human rights. For example, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has trained approximately 300 prison officers on crisis management, health care and other issues. In Iraq, UNODC conducted training courses for the Corrections Service, and strengthened the training capacity of the National Corrections Training Academy. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) supported the rehabilitation of 22 prisons and the development of prison regulations. In Cambodia, OHCHR supported the adoption of a four-year strategic plan which provides a framework for prison

management and the treatment of prisoners. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan supported the development of prison regulations, implemented a cadet training programme for 100 new prison recruits and assisted in the development of a training curriculum. New guidance materials include the Prison Incident Management Handbook prepared by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and a Prison Evaluation Checklist for Post-Conflict Settings developed jointly with UNODC and UNDP.

The fight against impunity and transitional justice

28. In countries transitioning from conflict, the United Nations supported a range of transitional justice processes, including national consultations, truth-seeking, criminal prosecutions, reparations, vetting and institutional reforms. Fighting impunity for international crimes is a central component of sustainable transitions to peace and reconciliation. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and OHCHR continue to support the efforts of the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice, as well as the reform of security and judicial institutions. In Togo, OHCHR has assisted the transitional justice process since its inception, and is now supporting the follow-up mechanism responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, including its reparations and reconciliation programme. In Honduras, OHCHR is supporting the implementation and follow-up to the recommendations in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

29. To be effective and legitimate, transitional justice frameworks need to be established with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. In Afghanistan, the United Nations is supporting the Afghan People's Dialogue on Peace initiative. By the end of 2013, approximately 6,500 Afghans had been consulted on prospects for peace, reconciliation, security, economic development, human rights, justice and rule of law.

30. At the regional level, OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence organized regional consultations on transitional justice in Africa. It was the third regional event following meetings in the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

31. OHCHR published *Transitional Justice and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which explores the ways in which transitional justice processes have addressed violations of economic, social and cultural rights, and provides stakeholders with recommendations.

32. Transitions often require new laws for implementing agreed strategies to overcome conflicts. In Tunisia, OHCHR and UNDP supported the drafting of the law on transitional justice, adopted in December 2013 after an inclusive consultation process with over 4,000 justice and civil society actors, and are supporting the Truth and Dignity Commission inaugurated in June 2014. In Libya, the United Nations provided advice on the drafting of a law on transitional justice and legislative reforms which would include crimes such as torture and enforced disappearances and preclude the application of military jurisdiction to civilians. With the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the Afghan penal code is being revised to incorporate all criminal laws enacted since 2001. In Kyrgyzstan, a

project of the United Nations Democracy Fund is working on the promotion of anti-discrimination legislation, while UNDP is supporting the President's Office in the reform of key justice system legislation.

Gender-based violence

33. The fight against impunity in conflict-affected countries often requires specialized approaches targeting specific characteristics of certain crimes and victims. The United Nations has made important contributions to justice responses to gender-based violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia, UNDP supported assistance to survivors and the strengthening of investigation and prosecution capacities. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, UN-Women is supporting the Attorney General's Office to enhance access to justice for women victims of violence, and partnered with the Palestinian Bar Association to develop guidelines on legal aid for women. Specialized United Nations police teams supported counterparts in Darfur, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste to address cases of sexual and gender-based violence. In Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and South Sudan, United Nations police peacekeepers, with host State counterparts, prevent sexual violence through visibility patrols and community outreach. UNICEF supported more than 30,000 women and children victims of gender-based violence. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided legal assistance to survivors and safe shelters for women and supported capacity-building projects for community workers in many operations around the world.

34. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict has continued to assist national authorities in addressing impunity for conflict-related sexual violence in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Somalia and South Sudan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, the Team supported the development of an implementation plan for the joint communiqués on sexual violence signed in 2013. In Colombia, the Team supported the drafting of a law on access to justice for victims of sexual violence, adopted on 18 June, and contributed to the development of guidelines for the police and the military on conflict-related sexual violence. In Guinea, the Team's support to the Panel of Judges established to investigate and prosecute the crimes of 28 September 2009 resulted in the indictment of several high-ranking officials and over 300 hearings of victims of sexual violence. In the Central African Republic, the Team is supporting the gendarmerie and the police in establishing a mixed rapid response unit to respond to and investigate incidents of sexual violence.

35. OHCHR and UN-Women jointly developed the Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Reparations for Conflict-related Sexual Violence, to provide policy and operational guidance for United Nations engagement in the area of reparations for victims of conflict-related sexual violence. It highlights the relevant normative framework, and includes guiding principles for operational engagement, as well as guidance on how to utilize different forms of reparation.

Protection of children

36. Efforts to protect children in emergencies in more than 50 countries affected by armed conflict and natural disasters included large-scale emergencies in the

Central African Republic, the Philippines and the Syrian Arab Republic. UNICEF supported efforts in 16 countries to release children associated with armed forces or armed groups and reintegrate them into their families and communities. Global estimates indicate that, through UNICEF support, 13,500 children separated during armed conflict or natural disasters were reunited with their families during the year. More than 7,300 children associated with armed forces or groups were reunited with families and reintegrated into their communities. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF launched the campaign "Children, not Soldiers", which aims to prevent and end the recruitment and use of children by national security forces by 2016. UNODC conducted needs assessments on justice for children in Paraguay and Somaliland and on reforms related to children in detention in six countries. UNODC is also implementing projects on juvenile justice in five countries.

Internally displaced persons

37. During and after conflicts, the protection of internally displaced persons poses difficult challenges that have become even more acute as internal displacement becomes chronic in many countries. They were the focus of the 2013 annual Dialogue of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It resulted in a better understanding of implementation gaps and in the identification of practical tools to address them. UNHCR supported the adoption of national policies or legislation in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Yemen, and is supporting legislative drafting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Georgia. Together with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, UNHCR published a handbook on *Internal Displacement: Responsibility and Action* to help countries to formulate domestic frameworks and legislation to protect internally displaced persons.

B. Rule of law for sustainable development

38. Across the world, sustainable development needs to be supported by well-crafted normative frameworks and capable institutions. Justice and the rule of law are both goals of development as well as essential to the achievement of many development outcomes. United Nations assistance for development covers a wide range of initiatives, including constitution-making and legal reform, strengthening of judicial systems, combating corruption and enhancing States' capacities to implement their human rights commitments across the whole spectrum of rights, from civil and political to economic, social, cultural and environmental.

Conflict prevention

39. The Secretary-General's "Rights up Front" initiative was launched during the year. Rights up Front is an approach through which the United Nations aims to respond more effectively to the risk of serious violations of international human rights or of humanitarian law to ensure that the United Nations system meets the responsibilities set for it by the Charter and Member States. It is a lens through which the Organization examines and responds to threats of serious violations and identifies actions needed to prevent them from occurring. Another central aspect of Rights up Front is better organizational preparedness to ensure that the United Nations system, both on the ground and at Headquarters, is appropriately prepared to deal with evolving crisis situations.

40. The Office of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect has developed a framework of analysis of the risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, which can assist national, regional and international actors in assessing the risk of these crimes for preventive purposes. The Office has assisted national efforts to prevent and punish genocide and atrocities in Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia and to adopt legislation in Argentina and Paraguay.

41. Rule of law assistance for conflict prevention has developed innovative approaches, such as the support provided by UNDP to the Philippines for the signing in May 2014 of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro with the Moro Islamic Liberation Force.

Justice systems and law reform

42. Independent, efficient and competent judicial systems are the backbone of the rule of law, providing legitimate and peaceful means to solve conflicts, ensure accountability and provide redress. UNDP supported efforts to reform legal and policy frameworks to address exclusion and discrimination across 33 countries. In 55 countries in Asia and Africa, it is helping to implement comprehensive justice strategies, inclusive of informal and traditional justice systems at the community level. In Belarus, UNDP supports the specialization of courts and the improvement of legislation concerning the court system, and in Turkey it is supporting improvements in the administration of courts. Training initiatives on the domestic application of international human rights standards are also an important part of capacity-building efforts. OHCHR supported the judicial academies in Chile, the Dominican Republic and Peru in incorporating human rights training in their curricula, and the Judicial Council of Bolivia in reviewing the regulation of judicial careers.

National human rights institutions

43. National human rights institutions and ombudsperson institutions play key roles in promoting national compliance with international human rights obligations, as well as in combating impunity and promoting the rule of law. OHCHR supported processes for the establishment of national human rights institutions in Somalia and Yemen; and strengthened existing national human rights institutions in Ecuador, Haiti, Kosovo,[1] Myanmar, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda. The United Nations also supported the development and implementation of national action plans on human rights, for example in Honduras, Malaysia, Paraguay and Thailand. In Burundi, the Peacebuilding Fund continues to assist the National Independent Commission for Human Rights.

Death penalty

44. OHCHR continued its series of global panel events on the death penalty, intended to inform the forthcoming General Assembly debate on the resolution on a moratorium on the death penalty. The three thematic issues discussed over the past year include wrongful convictions, deterrence and public opinion, and discrimination.

[1] All references to Kosovo should be understood in full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Counter-terrorism

45. Supporting Member States' efforts to prevent and combat terrorism continues to be a high priority for the United Nations. Assistance provided by entities across the Organization includes a wide range of capacity-building efforts. The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force seeks to enhance the coordination and coherence of United Nations assistance to Member States in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It developed a matrix of projects and activities carried out by United Nations entities. With the leadership of OHCHR, it is implementing a project on training and capacity-building for law enforcement officials on human rights, the rule of law and prevention of terrorism, focused on the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, and updated the human rights reference guides on the stopping and searching of persons, and on security infrastructure.

46. The Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate continued to support Member States in promoting the implementation of international counter-terrorism commitments, assessing main challenges and priorities, and identifying key areas for technical assistance, working together with other international and regional partners to address capacity-building needs. UNODC provided training to more than 2,500 criminal justice officials on investigation and prosecution of terrorism and on enhancing international judicial cooperation, and developed training modules on human rights and criminal justice responses to terrorism and on transport-related terrorist offences. More than 1,000 criminal justice and law enforcement officials from almost 120 countries have participated to date in the online Counter-Terrorism Learning Platform.

Corruption

47. Accountable and transparent institutions are the vehicle for delivering services according to human rights and rule of law principles. Corruption diverts resources needed for development and undermines the public trust in institutions. UNODC provides assistance to Member States on domestic legislation to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as well as on strengthening capacities to prevent, detect and investigate corruption. UNODC facilitates access and exchange of knowledge through the online portal TRACK and other tools, and implements programmes to promote transparency, integrity and accountability in criminal justice and rule of law institutions.

Drug trafficking

48. Continuing United Nations initiatives to combat drug trafficking, led by UNODC, include the joint West Africa Coast Initiative, supporting the establishment of transnational crime units; the Triangular Initiative of Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, facilitating regional law enforcement coordination; the Maritime Regional Security Initiative; the Paris Pact initiative, now connecting various programmes for the regions affected by drugs originating from Afghanistan; the Container Control Programme; and the Airport Communication Project. UNODC issued a report on drug trafficking through south-eastern Europe.

Human trafficking

49. UNODC continued providing assistance to Member States on the implementation of the Protocols to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, including through an *Assessment Guide to the Criminal Justice Response to the Smuggling of Migrants*, the continuing documentation of cases in the human trafficking case law database covering over 75 jurisdictions, as well as efforts specifically geared to the protection of children from trafficking. Coordination on these issues among United Nations entities continues to be strengthened through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and the Global Migration Group. UNICEF supported a training project in Cambodia that resulted in a memorandum of understanding on protection of victims of trafficking between the Governments of Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam. UNHCR is supporting the implementation of national plans to address trafficking and smuggling in Ethiopia, Kenya and the Sudan, in line with its 2013 regional strategy and plan of action on smuggling and trafficking from the East and Horn of Africa.

Firearms trafficking

50. UNODC initiated a global study on firearms trafficking and, under its Global Firearms Programme, provides training to criminal justice practitioners and legislative advice. UNODC supports the implementation of the Protocol on firearms to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime with delivery of firearms marking equipment.

Protection of children

51. The protection of children's rights continues to be an important component of the rule of law and human rights work of the Organization. In 51 countries, UNICEF supported Governments in addressing policies, legislation and strategies on justice for children, leading to the adoption of at least 12 national laws on the protection of child rights within the justice systems, with the potential to affect 410 million children. Progress has been made in the application of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime, with 54 countries now reporting that laws and policies supporting those standards are in place. Training on justice for children issues included UNODC training in Colombia on restorative justice for children and in Cabo Verde on juvenile justice information management systems. UNICEF and UNODC are developing a training curriculum for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials on the treatment of child victims and witnesses of child sexual abuse in four South-East Asian countries. UNICEF supported the registration of the births of approximately 30.6 million children, in part through improvements in service delivery mechanisms, including integrated approaches combining birth registration with the health, education and social service sectors.

Refugees

52. The development and implementation of normative frameworks addressing the protection of refugees was supported by UNHCR in more than 50 countries. To end arbitrary detention of asylum-seekers and other migrants, UNHCR launched a five-year strategy which will focus on 13 countries in the initial phase. Guidance

tools developed in this area include the Guidelines on Temporary Protection or Stay Arrangements; new Guidelines on International Protection: Claims to Refugee Status related to Military Service; the UNHCR Protection Manual, which contains a repository of UNHCR guidance and policy papers; and a Russian version of Refworld.

Statelessness

53. A rule of law-based system requires laws and policies on nationality and statelessness that are consistent with international standards to prevent statelessness and to protect stateless persons, and that are consistent with international human rights. UNHCR provided advice in over 65 countries to support the adoption or amendment of laws on citizenship and the protection and identification of stateless persons. Important reforms to address statelessness were undertaken in Côte d'Ivoire, Hungary, Senegal, Turkey, Turkmenistan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Sustainable urbanization

54. More than 50 per cent of the world's population is now urban and the process of urbanization is rapidly accelerating. Sustainable urbanization creates opportunities for the realization of development objectives. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) assists States in strengthening the rule of law and incorporating human rights principles into their laws and policies relating to shelter, the provision of basic services and emergency response, including the development of tools for the mediation of conflicts over land. UN-Habitat also supports planning for urban development promoting quality legal frameworks, equity and governance.

Natural resources and the environment

55. In the resolution adopted at the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly held in June 2014, Member States called upon UNEP and the other members of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group to strengthen environmental rule of law. In the context of the Assembly, UNEP organized a symposium on environmental justice and sustainable development. It highlighted the importance of law and strong implementing institutions to respond to increasing environmental pressure in ways that respect fundamental rights and principles of fairness, including for future generations. UNEP, OHCHR and the independent experts on human rights and the environment have undertaken initiatives to advance the linkages between the environment and human rights. These include a consultation on the right to a healthy environment focusing on Africa, which builds on previous ones on procedural rights related to environmental protection and on the relationship between environmental protection and groups in vulnerable situations, held in Nairobi and Panama respectively.

C. Support to constitution-making initiatives

56. Constitutions are the foundational legal framework supporting a rule of law system. Constitution drafting or reform processes are often instrumental for peace agreements and peacebuilding efforts. At the country level, the United Nations is

providing constitutional support to more than 15 countries. In Somalia and Yemen it is providing support to the constitutional revision process, and in Liberia and Sierra Leone the Organization has supported participation in the review process through civic education and an inclusive drafting process. In Tunisia, UNDP provided technical assistance to the National Constituent Assembly in the constitutional drafting process, and supported a nation-wide dialogue that consulted more than 30,000 citizens. In Libya, the United Nations is supporting the constitutional drafting Assembly, and a broader constitutional dialogue process. In Viet Nam, UNDP provided advice on comparative experiences on issues such as the Constitutional Court, models of local governance and a wide range of human rights provisions. OHCHR provided advice on the incorporation of international standards into the Constitutions of Fiji and Tunisia.

57. To identify strengths and gaps in gender-responsive legal frameworks, UN-Women launched a global database of all provisions relating to gender equality contained in constitutions across the world. UN-Women also produced an in-depth case study of Zimbabwe's constitutional reform process, where women's leadership was instrumental in incorporating progressive articles on gender equality into the Constitution.

58. To strengthen system-wide information-sharing, coordination, and partnership in the area of constitutional assistance, the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women established an internal coordination structure to enhance United Nations constitutional support to Member States. The group launched a newsletter, *The UN Constitutional*, to raise awareness, share information on the wide range of constitutional support provided by United Nations missions and country teams, and strengthen constitutional assistance.

D. Access to justice

59. In the declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law, of 2012, Heads of State and Government emphasized the right of equal access to justice for all, including members of vulnerable groups, and reaffirmed the commitment of Member States to taking all necessary steps to provide fair, transparent, effective, non-discriminatory and accountable services that promote access to justice for all, including legal aid. United Nations activities in support of Member States' efforts to ensure access to justice are a core component of the work in the area of rule of law.

Geographical access

60. In many remote areas the distance needed to travel to reach justice institutions prevents people from accessing justice. In response to this challenge, several United Nations peace operations support mobile court initiatives. In Iraq, UNDP is developing a programme to promote access to justice through increased legal awareness, accessible legal services in rural and remote areas, and legal aid. In Somalia, UNDP supported 13 mobile courts in areas where formal justice was previously not available. People in nearly 100 villages and camps of internally displaced persons were given access to justice through the mobile courts, which heard a total of 1,824 cases.

61. Making justice services available can also involve construction of courthouses in areas where previously none existed. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) supported the construction of four rural courthouses in Darfur, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo MONUSCO supported the opening of the first State court in Shabunda district.

Legal aid

62. One of the major obstacles in accessing justice is the cost of legal advice and representation. Legal aid programmes are a central component of strategies to enhance access to justice. MINUSTAH in Haiti is assisting in the establishment and management of legal aid offices, and ONUCI in Côte d'Ivoire has supported the opening of six legal clinics which have offered workshops to more than 15,000 people and free legal consultations to almost 3,000. OHCHR provided advice for the drafting and adoption of a law on legal aid in Kazakhstan, and in Azerbaijan provided advice to a working group created to draft a law on legal aid. In Somaliland, UNODC supported the development of a law on legal aid, guidelines for practitioners, and a programme to ensure quality of legal aid services. In Pakistan, UNDP supported the implementation of mobile legal aid clinics and the establishment of legal aid desks within 14 court houses, benefiting a total of 21,140 persons. In 26 countries, UNICEF promoted legal aid for child victims and witnesses, including in Egypt, where legal aid was provided with local partners to 1,160 children in detention, including 222 Syrian children detained in police stations without charge. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the United Nations Democracy Fund launched a project for increased access to legal aid on the West Bank, and in Guatemala the Fund worked on access to justice for indigenous people.

63. Initiatives in support of legal aid programmes can also be part of broader rule of law strategies. UNDP worked in Ethiopia to support the drafting of the new legal aid strategy as part of the national human rights action plan; in the United Republic of Tanzania, the legal sector reform strategy in Zanzibar included strengthening access to legal aid for the most vulnerable; and in Rwanda, capacity-building of the Ministry of Justice and justice institutions included legal aid services for vulnerable groups.

Access to justice for specific groups

64. Access to justice efforts tailored to address the needs of refugees, children, women and other specific groups are also part of the United Nations activities in this area. For example, further to its 2012 policy on access to justice, UNHCR supported mobile legal aid clinics and mobile courts in Kenya, for cases of sexual and gender-based violence. At the end of June 2013, more than 4,000 refugees had received general legal counselling from mobile clinics. UNHCR also launched a pilot mobile court programme for refugees in Uganda to encourage reporting of sensitive crimes such as rape, sexual assault and domestic violence. UNICEF has actively supported efforts to enhance access to justice for children in 115 countries. In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF supported the implementation of a legal aid programme providing legal help to detained children, which resulted in the release of 240 children over a 12-month period. In Iraq, UNDP is supporting access to justice for Syrian women and girl refugees through services that have benefited more than 3,000 persons. UNDP is working in China to expand access to legal services for people living with HIV. In India, UNDP has been working on

strengthening legal literacy and legal services, especially for marginalized women, through community-based paralegal programmes.

65. UN-Women supports actions aimed at improving access to justice for women in 16 countries. In Afghanistan, UN-Women is supporting the establishment of a gender unit in the Supreme Court and supports the coordination and management of gender units of judicial institutions through training sessions. In Viet Nam, UNODC and UN-Women work to promote crime prevention and criminal justice initiatives with a focus on women. Following the launch by UN-Women of *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In Pursuit of Justice* (2011), UNDP, OHCHR and UN-Women are implementing a five-year joint global programme (2013-2018) to strengthen access to justice services for women through comprehensive and coordinated justice sector reforms.

Tools and guidance materials

66. The publication of materials with guidance for policymakers and practitioners has also been part of United Nations efforts to support Member States in enhancing access to justice. UNDP and UNODC developed a handbook on early access to legal aid in criminal justice processes. UNDP is also finalizing a practitioner's guide on legal aid, drawing on the experiences of programming on legal aid in Africa. In addition, UNDP and UNODC have launched a global study in order to gather data and to identify trends on access and availability of legal aid worldwide.

67. UN-Women, with UNDP support and the participation and endorsement of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, finalized a study on "Improving women's access to justice during and after conflict: mapping UN rule of law engagement". The study reviews the United Nations approach to women's access to justice in conflict-affected settings, making concrete recommendations for strengthening the impact of the United Nations system in this area.

68. UNDP has produced several guidance materials on legal empowerment, environmental justice and women's land rights, including *Legal Empowerment Strategies at Work: Lessons in Inclusion from Country Experiences; Environmental Justice: Comparative Experiences in Legal Empowerment; Engendering Access to Justice: Grassroots Women's Approaches to Securing Land Rights*. On justice in Africa, publications include *Rethinking the Role of Law and Justice in Africa's Development* and *Rule of Law and Access to Justice in Eastern and Southern Africa: Showcasing Innovations and Good Practices*.

IV. System-wide coordination and coherence

69. Efforts to enhance coordination and coherence in rule of law issues across the United Nations system have continued, both at Headquarters and at country levels. Implementation of the rule of law arrangements established in September 2012 has been further strengthened and there has been important progress in the establishment of the Rights up Front mechanism, envisioned to enhance the effectiveness of system-wide responses to crisis situations.

A. Strengthening of coordination and coherence at Headquarters

70. The Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group continues to be responsible for ensuring a strategic approach to the broader rule of law work of the Organization. Acknowledging the breadth of the United Nations work related to the rule of law, the membership of the Group has been now expanded to include 20 entities with important normative components in their mandates.

71. In addition to its ongoing function of exchanging information on the rule of law, during the past year, the Group worked in the development of policies intended to guide the work of United Nations entities in the areas of reparations for conflict-related sexual violence and the promotion of the rule of law in commercial relations. The Group conducted a lessons learned exercise on United Nations support to judicial mechanisms to fight impunity and promote reparations for international crimes, which will inform a guidance note to be developed by the Group.

72. In order to support discussions among Member States on the rule of law in the post-2015 agenda, the Group supported the organization of events open to all Member States aimed at informing those discussions. The discussions focused on the rule of law as a driver of inclusive development opportunities, and the ways in which the rule of law can be measured and thus inform programming and decision-making. The Group will continue to support Member States' deliberations on how best to incorporate the rule of law in the post-2015 development agenda.

73. In September 2013, the Secretary-General launched "Business for the Rule of Law", a new global initiative to engage the business community in mobilizing support for the rule of law. The Rule of Law Unit and the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group have been supporting the Global Compact in developing a framework which will provide guidance and promote dialogue on how companies are able to support the rule of law in the regions in which they operate. The framework will include suggested actions for business and examples of how companies across the world and in diverse sectors are taking action to actively support the rule of law in their business operations and relationships.

74. As part of its coordination mandate, the Rule of Law Unit has been engaging with several inter-agency groups related to the rule of law, in order to facilitate exchanges along a wide spectrum of activities. Such coordination mechanisms include the Coordinating Action on Small Arms; the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force; the Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking; the Inter-Agency Working Group on Democracy of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security; the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force; the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration; and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.

B. Headquarters support to country-level requests: global focal point

75. Under the joint global focal point for the police, justice and corrections areas arrangement, UNDP and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations coordinate the work of the United Nations system to provide more effective, nationally led rule of law support in crisis and post-crisis settings. The global focal point is a Headquarters-based field support mechanism which provides United Nations field

presences with all the resources they need, in terms of specialized expertise, knowledge and advice on assessments, planning, funding and partnerships, to respond to requests from the host country authorities for support to police, justice and corrections institutions.

76. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP have made notable progress in operationalizing the global focal point. Overall, 12 United Nations entities and 4 international organizations are currently engaging in efforts under the global focal point arrangement, including to ensure appropriate gender mainstreaming in rule of law country programmatic support. Together with other United Nations partners, the global focal point has provided rule of law support to host country authorities in 19 countries. Activities have included joint assessment visits, joint planning and partnerships, deployment of personnel and advice on programme structures and funding streams. The consolidation of this joint effort remains contingent upon the availability of additional resources and the support of Member States and other partners.

77. The global focal point deployed 13 joint missions and 8 technical experts, and supported joint planning efforts in 11 countries. In Sierra Leone, the global focal point partners are working together in the area of policing to avoid gaps in the delivery of essential security services. In Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the global focal point is supporting the transfer of competencies from the mission to the United Nations country team. In Côte d'Ivoire, the global focal point deployed experts on judicial inspection and land rights to serve both the mission and country team, enabling them to address these key drivers of conflict. In Chad, the global focal point partners are working on training on sexual and gender-based violence issues in policing.

C. Country-level rule of law arrangements

78. United Nations senior-level leadership at the country level is responsible for guiding and overseeing the Organization's rule of law strategies and for coordinating United Nations country support on the rule of law. There are several recent examples of rule of law strategies at the country level developed through the global focal point. In Somalia, the global focal point helped to design the structures through which the United Nations mission could deliver on its justice and security mandate. The arrangement developed a comprehensive national sector-wide reform programme; created a single United Nations team; and set up a single funding stream, a window of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund established to resource the implementation of the New Deal Compact for Somalia. In Afghanistan, United Nations entities established the Justice and Rule of Law Results Group under the global focal point arrangement; and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework included an outcome area on the rule of law, and developed a joint justice and rule of law workplan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the multi-annual programme of the Government and the United Nations (UNDP, MONUSCO and UNODC) in support of the justice sector was launched, also under the global focal point arrangement. In Burundi, the global focal point supported the development of the rule of law strategy as part of the United Nations Joint Transition Plan.

D. Strengthening the rule of law in the Organization

79. The internal system of administration of justice is an essential component for the observance of the rule of law within the Organization and for its staff members. As at 23 June 2014, the United Nations Dispute Tribunal had issued 993 judgements, while the United Nations Appeals Tribunal had issued 427.

United Nations A/69/182

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 July 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Item 27 of the provisional agenda*
Advancement of women: implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/140 and focuses on the extent to which gender perspectives are reflected in the work of the General Assembly, of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, and of selected intergovernmental processes of the United Nations. The report concludes with recommendations for further measures to enhance the implementation of gender equality mandates.

* A/69/150.

14-58179 (E) 140814

Please recycle

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Integration of a gender perspective into the work of selected intergovernmental bodies	3
	A. Methodology	3
	B. Quantitative findings	4
	C. In-depth analysis	13
III.	Contribution of the Commission on the Status of Women	20
IV.	Factors accounting for the successful integration of a gender perspective into intergovernmental outcomes	21
V.	Integrating a gender perspective into intergovernmental processes, including in the post-2015 development agenda: the role of UN-Women	22
VI.	Conclusions and recommendations	25

I. Introduction

1. In its annual resolution on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the most recent of which was resolution 68/140, the Assembly has consistently called upon the bodies of the United Nations system to increase efforts to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under their consideration and within their mandates.

2. The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/140 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9, focuses on the extent to which selected intergovernmental processes of the United Nations integrate gender perspectives into their work.[1] It provides a quantitative and qualitative assessment of progress achieved and remaining gaps, in comparison to previous years. The report aims to support the Assembly in monitoring the implementation of guidance provided in resolution 68/140.

II. Integration of a gender perspective into the work of selected intergovernmental bodies

3. The present report is based on an analysis of the content of the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session and of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly at that session, as well as the reports of the Secretary-General to the 2013 sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. The same methodology has been used over several years, therefore the analysis of trends gives a solid picture of change over time.

A. Methodology

4. The documents reviewed were examined for evidence of the incorporation of a gender perspective, as determined by the presence of the following keywords: gender, sex, woman, man, girl, boy, female, male, sexual, reproductive and maternal (including their plural forms). Documents with at least one occurrence of a keyword were considered to have included a gender perspective. False positive results, for instance "man-made disaster" or "sexual exploitation" with no mention of the sex of the victims/survivors or of the perpetrators, were discounted.

5. While the list of words selected excludes others that could arguably reflect a gender perspective, the selected words are those most often found in reports and resolutions that address gender equality issues. However, the assessment of the inclusion of a gender perspective went beyond the mere mention of these keywords. Documents that passed this first filter were analysed in more depth to assess the extent to which a gender perspective had indeed been reflected.

[1] The present report complements the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2014/63) and his reports to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-eighth session on the actions taken by Member States in respect of gender mainstreaming at the national level (E/CN.6/2014/3 and E/CN.6/2014/4).

6. Reports of the Secretary-General and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session available in the Official Document System of the United Nations as at 13 June 2014 were examined. Where documents were submitted to more than one intergovernmental body, they were considered only once.

B. Quantitative findings

7. Intergovernmental bodies had many opportunities to incorporate gender perspectives into their work. In total, 297 reports of the Secretary-General were considered and 349 resolutions adopted by the intergovernmental bodies whose work was reviewed. The General Assembly alone considered 249 reports of the Secretary-General and adopted 275 resolutions at its sixty-eighth session.[2] As table 1 demonstrates, the number of reports considered and of resolutions adopted over the past four years has fluctuated somewhat, but has remained largely within the same range.

8. At its substantive session in 2013, the Economic and Social Council reviewed 15 reports of the Secretary-General and adopted 43 resolutions. Table 1 indicates that, apart from a decrease in reports from 2011 to 2012, these figures have also remained within a relatively consistent range.

9. The functional commissions — excluding the Commission on the Status of Women, which focuses exclusively on gender equality issues — considered 33 reports of the Secretary-General and adopted 31 resolutions at their sessions in 2013. Table 1 shows that these numbers have fluctuated somewhat more noticeably in the past four years.

Table 1
Number of reports and resolutions, 2010-2013

Body	*2010 reports*	*2010 resolutions*	*2011 reports*	*2011 resolutions*	*2012 reports*	*2012 resolutions*	*2013 reports*	*2013 resolutions*
General Assembly	244	270	249	259	214	257	249	275
Economic and Social Council	20	38	24	40	17	37	15	43
Functional commissions	38	38	53	46	41	30	33	31
Total	**302**	**346**	**326**	**345**	**272**	**324**	**297**	**349**

10. A number of the resolutions have an exclusive focus on gender equality issues. Five such resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly under agenda items or sub-items dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, namely, resolutions on women in development (68/227), violence against women migrant workers (68/137), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (68/138), the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (68/139) and the annual resolution calling for the present report (68/140). In

[2] Based on documents available in the Official Document System of the United Nations as at 13 June 2014.

addition, resolutions on the girl child (68/146) and on taking action against gender-related killing of women and girls (68/191) also had an exclusive gender equality focus, adopted under other agenda items.

11. The Economic and Social Council continued to adopt annual resolutions on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (2013/16), and on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (2013/17).

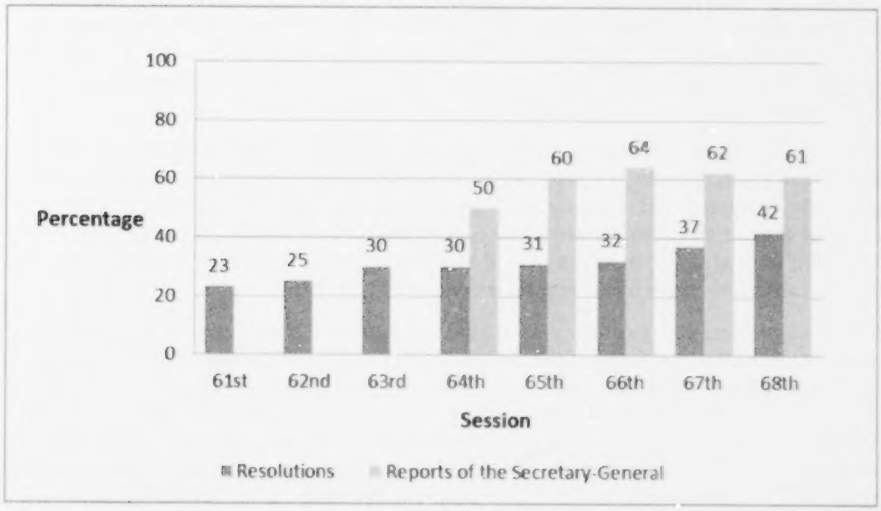
12. While the findings of the present report reveal a consistent upward trend in the reflection of a gender perspective in the resolutions of the General Assembly, progress in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions is inconsistent, as described below.

1. General Assembly

Reports of the Secretary-General

13. Reports of the Secretary-General support discussions that lead to the adoption of resolutions by intergovernmental bodies. Of the reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, 61 per cent included a gender perspective (see figure I and table 2). This represents a slight decrease, by one percentage point, from the sixty-seventh session but remains relatively high, indicating that gender equality issues are seen as relevant across a range of substantive areas.

Figure I
Trends in the share of General Assembly documents that include a gender perspective



14. While the percentage of reports containing a gender perspective submitted to the General Assembly for consideration in plenary sessions remained the same, the picture was uneven in regard to those submitted to the Main Committees. There was an increase of such reports submitted to the Second (Economic and Financial Committee), Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) and Fourth

(Special Political and Decolonization Committee) Committees (an increase of 7, 10 and 5 percentage points respectively), and a decrease in such reports submitted to the First (Disarmament and International Security Committee), Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary Committee) and Sixth (Legal Committee) Committees (by 20, 1 and 21 percentage points respectively).

Table 2

Number and percentage of reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly that include a gender perspective

Body to which report is allocated	*Total reports*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Plenary	31	25	81
First Committee	25	7	28
Second Committee	35	25	71
Third Committee	44	42	96
Fourth Committee	20	12	60
Fifth Committee	80	34	43
Sixth Committee	14	6	43
Total	**249**	**151**	**61**

Resolutions

15. A total of 42 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session integrated a gender perspective. This constitutes an increase by a solid 5 percentage points from the previous session, and continues the steady increase seen over the past five years, from 30 per cent at the sixty-fourth session to 42 per cent at the sixty-eighth session (see figure I). The increase in 2013 is particularly significant because it reflects improvements in all Committees except the Third and the Sixth Committees.

16. An analysis of resolutions adopted by each Committee (see figure II and table 3) shows that, as in previous years, the Second and Third Committees, and the General Assembly in plenary, were much more likely than the other Committees to integrate a gender perspective into their resolutions. The Second and Fifth Committees, the General Assembly in plenary and the Fourth Committee contributed the most to the increase observed at the sixty-eighth session.

17. The percentage of resolutions including a gender perspective adopted by the Second Committee increased from 50 to 66 per cent; and in the Fifth Committee, from 5 to 15 per cent. Among resolutions adopted without reference to a Main Committee, the percentage rose from 47 to 55 per cent and in the Fourth Committee, from 21 to 27 per cent. Little corresponding change occurred in the percentage of resolutions adopted by the other Committees. In the First Committee, there was an increase of 1 percentage point, from 9 to 10 per cent, in resolutions containing gender-related references. In the Third Committee, there was a slight decrease in resolutions with a gender perspective, by 3 percentage points, from 71 to 68 per cent, but it remains the Committee with the highest percentage of such resolutions. There was also a decline in the Sixth Committee, by two percentage points, from 7 to 5 per cent.

Figure II

Trends in the share of resolutions of the General Assembly that include a gender perspective, by Main Committee

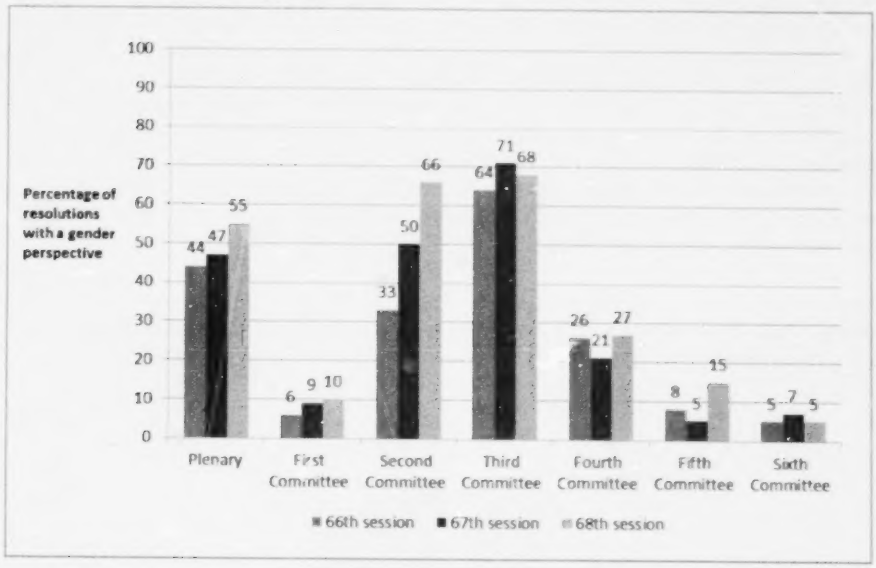


Table 3

Number and percentage of General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective

Originating body	*Total resolutions*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Plenary	42	23	55
First Committee	48	5	10
Second Committee	41	27	66
Third Committee	71	48	68
Fourth Committee	26	7	27
Fifth Committee	26	4	15
Sixth Committee	21	1	5
Total	**275**	**115**	**42**

18. The picture is further enriched when examining the contribution made by the Main Committees and the General Assembly in plenary to the pool of Assembly resolutions with a gender perspective (see figure III and table 4). Although it was responsible for only 26 per cent of all resolutions adopted by the Assembly, the Third Committee accounted for 42 per cent of all Assembly resolutions that included a gender perspective. The Second Committee accounted for 24 per cent, and the plenary for 20 per cent, of the resolutions reflecting a gender perspective. The First Committee, which accounted for 17 per cent of all Assembly resolutions, contributed only 4 per cent of the resolutions with a gender perspective. The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Committees accounted, respectively, for 6, 4 and 1 per cent of such

resolutions while contributing 9, 9 and 8 per cent, respectively, of all Assembly resolutions.

19. In order to maintain an upward trend in the proportion of General Assembly resolutions with a gender perspective, the First, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Committees, in particular, would need to increase the attention given to gender equality issues. At the same time, given the sizeable share of their contribution to the overall pool of resolutions, continued increases in the reflection of gender perspectives in resolutions of the plenary as well as of the Second and Third Committees are necessary. Such progress would contribute to making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

Figure III

Origin of all General Assembly resolutions that reflect a gender perspective

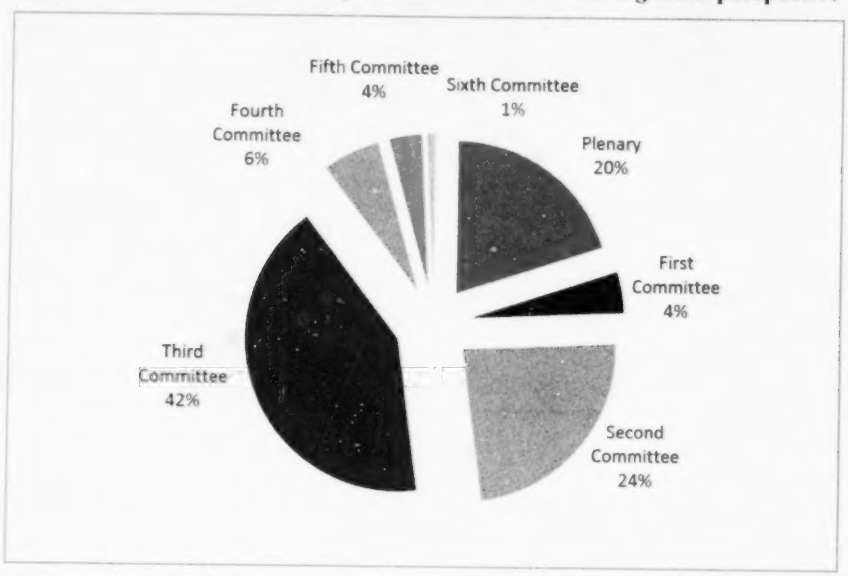


Table 4

Origin of all General Assembly resolutions and percentage of all General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective

Originating body	*Percentage of all General Assembly resolutions*	*Percentage of all General Assembly resolutions with a gender perspective*
Plenary	15	20
First Committee	17	4
Second Committee	15	24
Third Committee	26	42
Fourth Committee	9	6
Fifth Committee	9	4
Sixth Committee	8	1

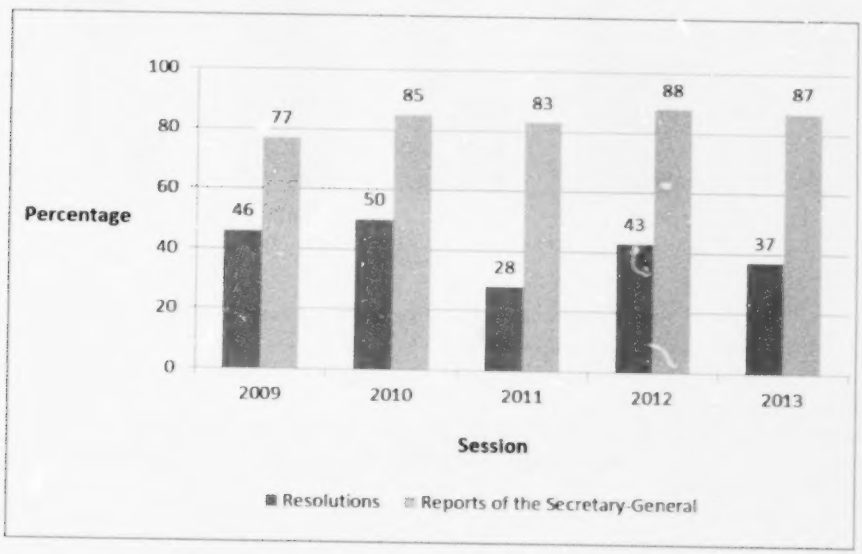
2. Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions

Reports of the Secretary-General

20. As is the case for the General Assembly, the reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 2013 were more likely than resolutions to include a gender perspective (see figure IV and table 5). Thirteen out of the 15 reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Council in 2013 included a gender perspective.[3] This figure reflects a decrease of 1 per cent from 2012.

Figure IV

Trends in the share of Economic and Social Council documents that include a gender perspective



21. An increase from 51 per cent in 2012 to 75 per cent in 2013 was recorded in the percentage of reports with a gender perspective submitted to the functional commissions (see figure V and table 5), reaching the highest percentage since 2010.

[3] The majority of documents submitted to the Economic and Social Council originate either from subsidiary bodies or other entities of the United Nations system, or are notes of the Secretariat, and are therefore not included in this analysis.

Figure V

Trends in the share of documents of the functional commissions that include a gender perspective

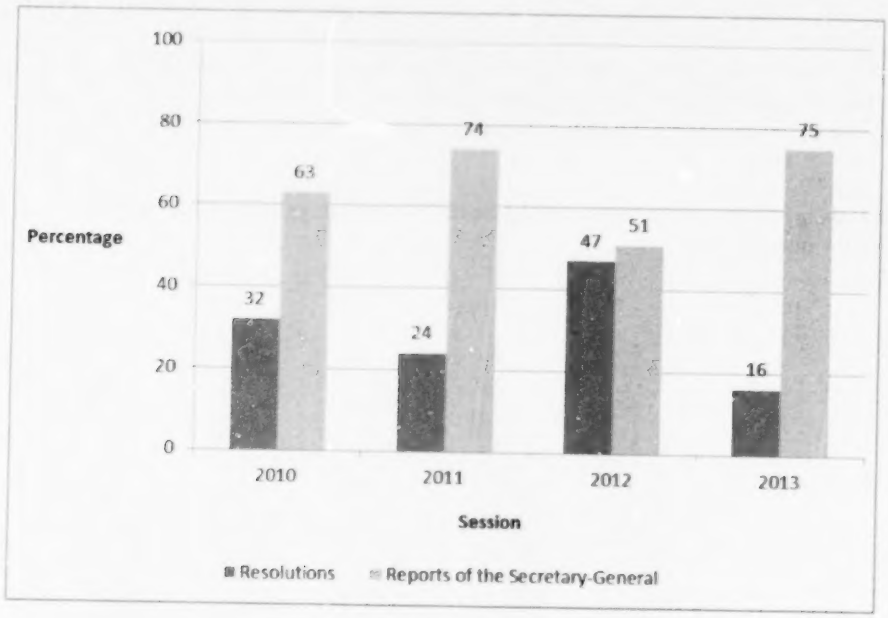


Table 5

Number and percentage of reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions in 2013 that include a gender perspective

Body to which report is submitted	*Total reports*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Economic and Social Council	15	13	87
Functional commissions of the Council[a]	40	30	75
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice[b]	8	5	63
Commission on Narcotic Drugs[b]	4	2	50
Commission on Science and Technology for Development	2	2	100
Statistical Commission	8	4	50
Commission on Population and Development	4	4	100
Commission for Social Development	7	7	100
United Nations Forum on Forests	7	6	86

[a] These results do not include the Commission on the Status of Women, owing to its exclusive focus on gender equality issues.

[b] The Commission on Narcotic Drugs considered reports of the Secretariat, which were included in the analysis.

Resolutions

22. A gender perspective was reflected in 37 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive sessions of 2013 (see figure IV and table 6), reflecting a decrease of 6 percentage points compared to substantive sessions of 2012, when 43 per cent of resolutions integrated a gender perspective.

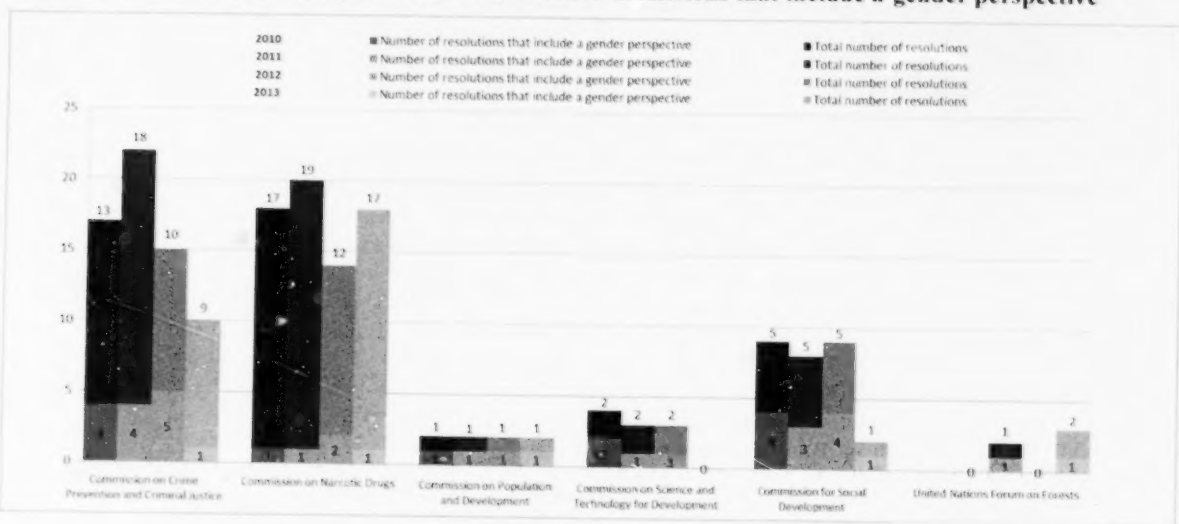
23. Overall, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (excluding the Commission on the Status of Women) paid significantly less attention to gender equality issues in 2013 than in the previous year, with only 16 per cent of their 2013 resolutions reflecting a gender perspective compared to 47 per cent in 2012 (see figure V). This development may also have contributed to the decrease observed in the proportion of Council resolutions that included a gender perspective given that the work of the functional commissions is closely linked to that of the Council: in 2013, 72 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the Council at its substantive session had originally been drafted by the functional commissions.[4] The number of resolutions adopted by functional commissions in 2013 increased slightly, to 31, from 30 resolutions in 2012.

24. Figure VI and table 6 provide a breakdown of resolutions by functional commission. The decrease in the proportion of resolutions with a gender perspective observed in 2013 for the functional commissions as a whole is attributable to the very low proportion of such resolutions adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs: 1 of the 9 resolutions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice integrated a gender perspective, and 1 of 17 resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs did so. The latter, in particular, reverted back to the status of 2011, when 1 of 19 resolutions had a gender perspective. As these two commissions contributed by far the largest number of resolutions to the pool of outputs produced by functional commissions (26 of the total of 31 resolutions), the impact of their work on the overall results is significant. At the same time, there was a decline in the overall number of resolutions adopted by the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, both of which have traditionally paid attention to gender perspectives. Excluding the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, attention to gender perspectives among the functional commissions remained very strong.

[4] This figure includes draft resolutions submitted by the Commission on the Status of Women.

Figure VI

Trends in the share of resolutions of some functional commissions that include a gender perspective



Note: The United Nations Forum on Forests meets biennially.

Table 6

Number and percentage of resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions that included a gender perspective in 2013

Originating body	*Total resolutions*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Economic and Social Council	43	16	37
Functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council[a]	31	5	16
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice	9	1	11
Commission on Narcotic Drugs	17	1	6
Commission on Population and Development	1	1	100
Commission on Social Development	1	1	100
Commission on Science and Technology for Development	–	–	–
United Nations Forum on Forests[b]	2	1	50

[a] These results do not include the Commission on the Status of Women, owing to its exclusive focus on gender equality issues. The Statistical Commission traditionally only adopts decisions.

[b] The United Nations Forum on Forests meets biennially.

C. In-depth analysis

25. The level of attention given to gender equality issues and the positioning of references to such issues within reports and resolutions provide an indication of the qualitative strength of the gender perspective reflected. In-depth analysis suggests that reports and resolutions often vary greatly in the level of attention they give to gender equality issues.

1. Positioning of references to gender issues

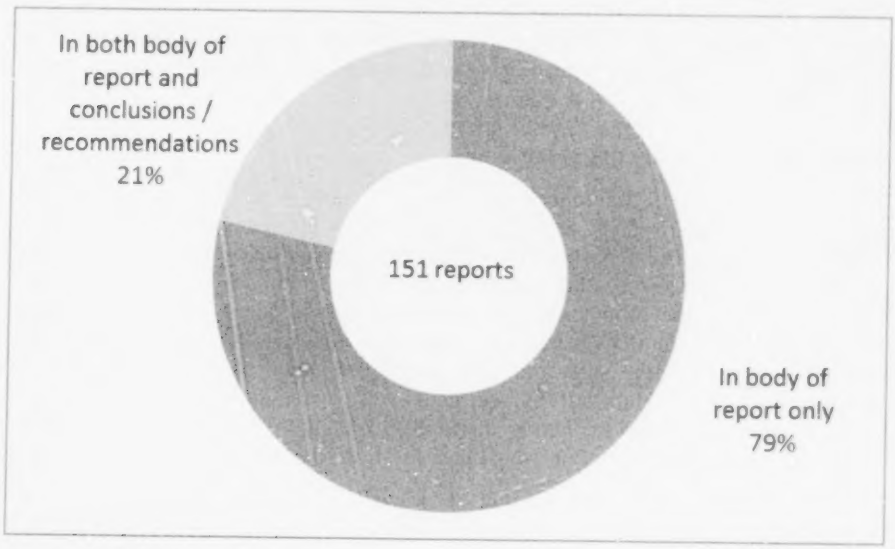
26. The position of references to gender issues within intergovernmental documents determines their prominence and could influence the likelihood of follow-up actions. The reports of the Secretary-General draw more attention to gender equality issues when such references are reflected not only in the body of the report, but also in the conclusions and recommendations. The emphasis on gender equality issues in resolutions is stronger when those issues are referred to in both the preambular and operative parts and when a specific action or recommendation to address the issues is included. This assessment was carried out on documents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council only, as there were too few reports and resolutions of the functional commissions to support such analysis.

27. An analysis of the positioning of relevant references in reports of the Secretary-General demonstrates that gender equality issues are not yet prioritized systematically (see figures VII and VIII). In most reports that included a gender perspective, references appeared exclusively in the body of the reports, not in the conclusions and/or recommendations. Of the reports with a gender perspective, 21 per cent of those submitted to the General Assembly and 31 per cent of those submitted to the Economic and Social Council included relevant references in both the body and in the conclusions and/or recommendations, which represents a decline of 6 percentage points for reports to the Assembly compared with its sixty-seventh session and an increase of 6 percentage points for reports to the Council compared with its sessions in 2012. The limited treatment of gender equality issues in the conclusions and/or recommendations means that opportunities are not systematically seized to recommend actions for addressing gender equality issues.

28. These findings demonstrate that more efforts are needed within the United Nations to include a gender perspective in the policy recommendations that the Secretary-General submits to intergovernmental bodies. Such improvements could be accelerated by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council explicitly requesting that this information be included in reports to be submitted to them, including in conclusions and recommendations.

Figure VII

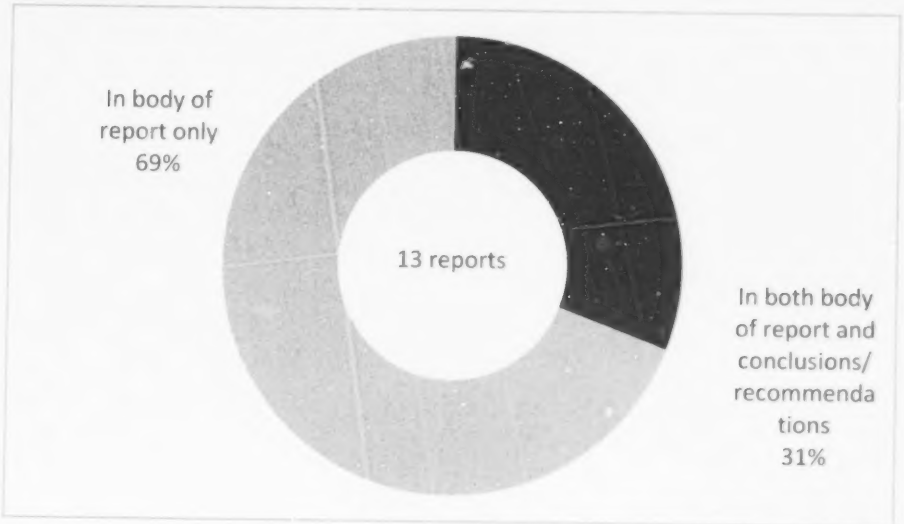
Position of references to gender issues in reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly



Note: Of the 151 reports of the Secretary-General with a gender perspective that were submitted to the General Assembly, 50 reports (33%) did not include a section on conclusions and recommendations.

Figure VIII

Position of references to gender issues in reports of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council

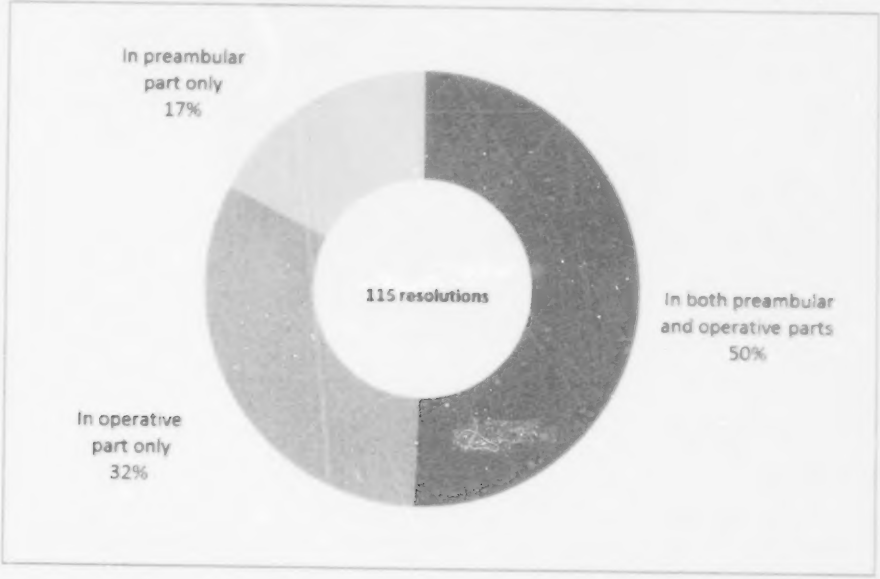


Note: Of the 13 reports of the Secretary-General with a gender perspective that were submitted to the Economic and Social Council, 5 reports (39%) did not include a section on conclusions and recommendations.

29. The analysis of the positioning of gender-related references in resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council revealed that such references were most likely to be found in both the preambular and operative parts of resolutions (see figures IX and X). The second most likely scenario was the inclusion of a gender perspective in the operative part only, with no reference to gender in the preambular part. Few resolutions integrated a gender perspective in the preambular part only. These findings are consistent with those of past years.

Figure IX

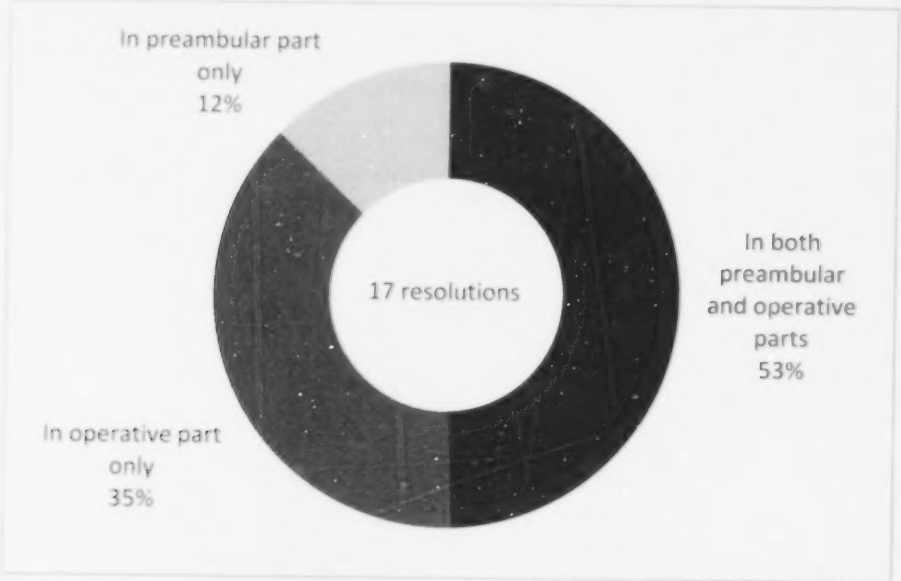
Position of references to gender issues in resolutions of the General Assembly



Note: 42 per cent or 115 out of the 275 resolutions of the General Assembly paid attention to gender issues. Of the 115 resolutions that integrated a gender perspective, one was a declaration (resolution 68/4) and thus did not have preambular and operative paragraphs.

Figure X

Position of references to gender issues in resolutions of the Economic and Social Council



2. Qualitative assessment

Methodology

30. Although gender perspectives may be reflected in key sections of a report or resolution, their impact depends on the strength of the analysis and language used. To assess this, reports of the Secretary-General and resolutions were reviewed against qualitative variables. Reports were assessed qualitatively against two variables: the "coverage" of gender equality issues and the "quality" of the gender equality discussion. This assessment reviewed only documents of the General Assembly, owing to the lack of relevant documents of the other intergovernmental bodies to support a similar analysis in a wider context.

31. Reports that included a specific section on gender equality issues, as well as several references throughout the rest of the report, were considered to have high coverage. A single reference or a few short references were defined as low coverage. Medium coverage fell somewhere in between. The quality analysis of reports characterized cursory references such as "including women" as low quality, while reports that provided precise facts, including quantitative data disaggregated by sex and/or gender analysis ranged from medium to high quality. Assessing the quality of such reports is an important step towards differentiating perfunctory references to gender-related terminology from more attentive analysis of gender equality issues.

32. For example, the following excerpts from a report on international migration and development were considered to be of high quality as they feature data disaggregated by sex ("Globally, the proportion of female migrants has remained relatively stable, moving from 49.1 per cent in 2000 to 48.0 per cent in 2013"), as well as gender analysis ("In countries of origin, migration can be an enabler of the

empowerment of girls and of gender equality — for example, by increasing girls' enrolment in school — primarily as a result of remittances sent home. Migration can also reinforce existing gender inequalities, however, if, in the absence of one or both parents, girls and boys are forced to assume responsibilities as primary caregiver or breadwinner ...") (A/68/190, paras. 27 and 67).

33. Another example of a document considered to be of high quality is the report of the Secretary-General on agricultural technology for development (A/68/308). The report not only had a section on smallholders and rural women, which provided data disaggregated by sex in regard to the agricultural labour force, but also discussed the situation and needs of women farmers in areas such as sustainable land management and water use, as well as emerging issues.

34. Resolutions were analysed against one variable only and categorized as having a low, medium or high focus on gender equality issues. Resolutions that included a single, passing reference were considered to have a low focus. Resolutions with a high focus on gender equality issues were identified by the occurrence of a keyword in more than one paragraph and/or by the inclusion of specific language on the situation and needs of women and girls and/or men and boys.

35. One example is General Assembly resolution 68/102 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, which contains references to gender perspectives in multiple paragraphs. For example, in the preamble, the General Assembly reiterated the need for Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and other relevant actors to mainstream a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance, including by addressing the specific needs of women, girls, boys and men in a comprehensive and consistent manner. In paragraph 25, the Assembly encouraged efforts to provide education for all, especially for girls and boys, in humanitarian emergencies and in paragraph 39, the General Assembly urged all Member States to address gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies.

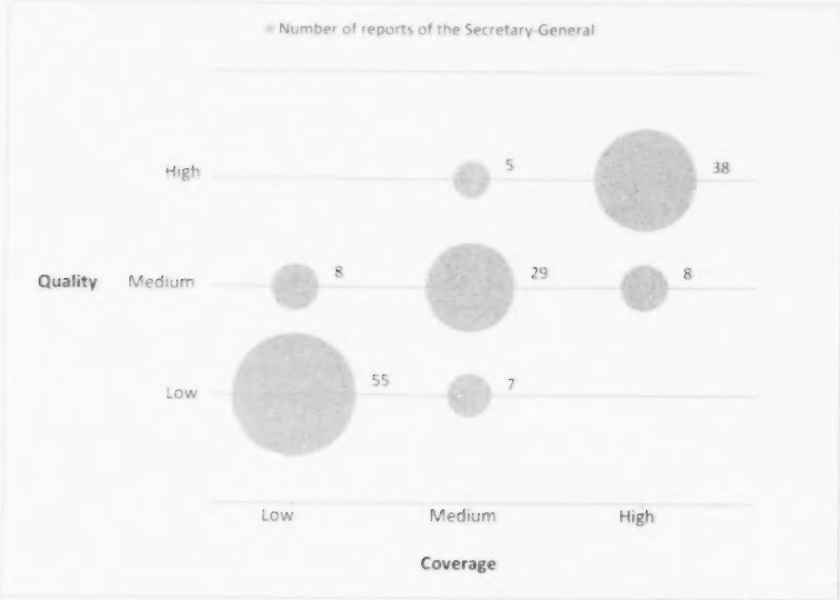
Reports of the Secretary-General

36. The distribution of the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly across the two variables, coverage and quality, is illustrated in figure XI below. The distribution of reports across the two axes demonstrates that reports varied widely both in the coverage of gender equality issues and in the characteristics of these inclusions. There tended to be a general correlation between coverage and quality: reports that devoted little space to gender equality issues were also likely to have only superficial references, while reports with extensive coverage tended to include more precise information and deeper analysis. As in the sixty-seventh session, there were more reports with low coverage and of low quality (55 out of 151 reports) than reports with high coverage and of high quality (39 out of 151 reports).

37. The percentage of reports rated as high/high, medium/high or high/medium decreased to 34 per cent at the sixty-eighth session from 40 per cent at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. At the same time, the percentage of reports rated as low/low, medium/low and low/medium increased to 47 per cent at the sixty-eighth session, from 41 per cent at the previous session, while the percentage of reports in the middle spectrum (medium/medium) remained the same (19 per cent).

Figure XI

Coverage and quality of gender equality references in reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, by frequency

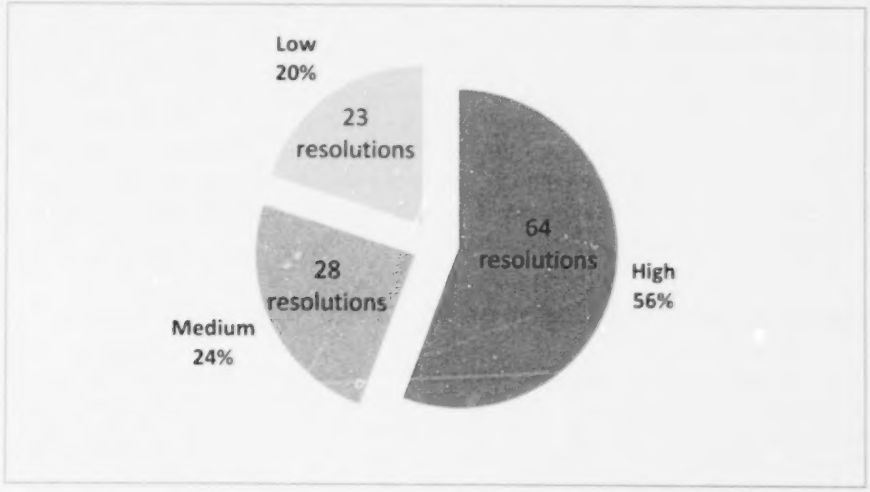


Resolutions

38. The 115 resolutions of the General Assembly (42 per cent) that included a gender perspective tended to do so in a fairly clear manner. Eighty per cent of those resolutions show a high or medium focus on gender equality issues (see figure XII). This means that the keywords indicating a gender perspective were found in more than one paragraph and/or that there was specific language on the situation and needs of, and opportunities for, women and girls and/or men and boys. This percentage is notably higher than that found in resolutions adopted during the sixty-seventh session (some 70 per cent), and suggests that most resolutions of the Assembly that include references related to gender perspectives reflect genuine attention to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Figure XII

Extent of focus on gender equality issues in General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective



39. Analysis of the extent of the focus on gender equality issues in General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective shows a significant increase in the percentage of high-focus resolutions, compared to the sixty-seventh session. While the share between low-, medium- and high-focus resolutions in 2012 was 28 per cent, 36 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, in 2013 the low-focus share declined to 20 per cent and the medium-focus share to 24 per cent, while the high-focus share increased to 56 per cent, which is a very positive development.

40. Resolutions addressed gender equality issues in different ways, including general calls to integrate a gender perspective into the area under consideration; recognition that women and girls may be in positions of greater vulnerability than men and boys; and recognition of gender equality both as a goal in itself and as a means for progressing towards the goals of the subject matter under consideration. Resolutions called for the full, active and equal participation of women in decision-making, for the empowerment of women and girls, including economic empowerment, and for addressing discrimination and violence against women and girls. There were also calls for action to ensure women's and girls' access to resources, support and services. Some resolutions call for collecting data disaggregated by sex and gender-specific information.

41. Many of the medium- and high-focus resolutions included paragraphs expressing recognition of the specific contribution and situation of women and girls and/or containing proposals for actions to respond to their rights and needs. For example, in General Assembly resolution 68/11 on the situation in Afghanistan, the Assembly reiterated the importance of upholding international obligations for the advancement of women's rights, emphasized its commitment to achieving the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of Afghan life, condemned all incidents of discrimination and violence against women and girls, and recognized the special needs of girls. Another example is resolution 68/217 on sustainable mountain development, in which the Assembly underlined the need for improved

access to resources, including land, for women in mountain regions, as well as the need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments, and encouraged Governments and intergovernmental organizations to integrate the gender dimension, including gender-disaggregated data, into mountain development activities, programmes and projects. Resolution 68/204 on the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development provides a high focus, as the Assembly reaffirmed that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential to achieve equitable and effective development and sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, and reiterated the need for gender mainstreaming in the formulation and implementation of development policies, including financing for development policies.

III. Contribution of the Commission on the Status of Women

42. As in previous years, the work of the Commission on the Status of Women was not included in the analysis of content covered in section II, in order to avoid biasing the results. The Commission's results during 2013 strongly confirmed that it is the unchallenged leader at the global level on issues of gender equality and the empowerment of women. As a deliberative, consensus-building and policymaking body, the Commission has primary responsibility for the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and a major role in promoting the strategy of gender mainstreaming. This leadership role is even more crucial as the target date for the Millennium Development Goals approaches; as Member States elaborate the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals; and as all stakeholders intensify activities in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Commission will undertake a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in March 2015.

43. The Commission's work in 2013 focused on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. The fifty-seventh session resulted in a commitment by Member States to take comprehensive action in five key areas to address this scourge and a road map for follow-up at the national level. Crucially, the Commission also emphasized that ending violence against women and girls is imperative for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and recommended that the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women be considered as a priority in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. The substantive preparations by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), including mobilization and alliance-building, as well as leadership, expert and technical support during the session, were instrumental in enabling the adoption of the agreed conclusions.

44. Towards this outcome, UN-Women implemented a comprehensive strategy to prepare a strong substantive basis on the priority theme and to build broad-based support for strengthening normative standards. UN-Women mobilized Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and academic experts through a range of activities, including an expert group meeting, a global stakeholders' forum at United Nations Headquarters and regional consultations. The unprecedented scope and level of preparations laid the groundwork for the highly successful fifty-seventh session. Similar efforts were undertaken in preparation for the

Commission's priority theme of 2014, namely "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls". Those efforts will be reflected in more detail in the next report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, covering the work of the Commission in 2014.

IV. Factors accounting for the successful integration of a gender perspective into intergovernmental outcomes

45. The present section focuses on the work of the Second and Fourth Committees, examines the mechanisms through which they increased attention to gender perspectives in their work during 2013 and highlights lessons for the work of other bodies.

46. The percentage of resolutions of the Second Committee that integrated a gender perspective increased significantly for the second consecutive session, with 66 per cent of such resolutions adopted at the sixty-eighth session, 50 per cent at the sixty-seventh session and 33 per cent at the sixty-sixth session. For instance, a number of resolutions covering sustainable development and climate-related issues (such as 68/210, 68/212, 68/213 and 68/214); financial system and development (such as 68/201 and 68/204); science, technology and innovation for development (68/220); disaster risk reduction (68/211); agriculture (such as 68/209, 68/232 and 68/233); and human settlements (68/239) included sometimes extensive attention to gender equality issues. Resolutions highlighted, for example, the need for gender mainstreaming in the subject matter, recognized the role of gender equality in achieving particular results, and outlined actions for the empowerment of women in the area under consideration. The fact that the Second Committee adopted its biennial resolution on women in development (68/227) may have been an incentive to expand attention to gender perspectives in other areas of the work of the Committee. Recent work by the Commission on the Status of Women on science and technology (agreed conclusions of the fifty-fifth session, see E/2011/27-E/CN.6/2011/12) and on natural disasters (resolution 56/2), and of the General Assembly on the situation of women in rural areas (resolution 68/139) may likewise have been catalytic for this progress.

47. An example from the work of the Fourth Committee shows how gender perspectives can be brought to bear on technical issues, in this instance by focusing on the participation of women. Indeed, a focus on the participation of women can be a first and catalytic step towards bringing gender perspectives more systematically into technical discussions and issues. Resolution 68/75 on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, for the first time, notes the importance of the equal participation of women in all fields of science and technology and encourages the regional centres for space science and technology education to continue to promote greater participation of women in their education programmes.

48. Given that there was limited progress with regard to the attention given to gender perspectives in reports of the Secretary-General, the expanded collaboration between Member States and UN-Women during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly may have been the key factor in influencing outcomes.

UN-Women undertook outreach in response to the call by the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/140, on the bodies of the United Nations system to increase efforts to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under their consideration. The main findings of the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/68/175) were captured in a one-page infographic on the integration of a gender perspective into the work of the General Assembly and widely disseminated to draw attention to areas of progress and remaining gaps.

49. UN-Women highlighted, in particular, untapped opportunities for better reflecting gender equality issues in the work of the Second Committee. Delegations welcomed these efforts and requested technical support to increase the attention paid to gender equality issues in a number of resolutions. UN-Women also flagged opportunities for including gender perspectives in the work of the Fourth Committee, which were favourably received. The Entity's visible and proactive role in support of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, its engagement in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and its follow-up, as well as the work of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other intergovernmental processes (see sect. V) through the provision of technical advice and inputs, briefing papers, the organization of side events and collaboration with stakeholders may also have contributed to increased commitment to addressing gender equality issues.

50. Such ongoing proactive outreach on the part of UN-Women facilitates the work of intergovernmental bodies and enables them to monitor the progress resulting from their efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in all sectors. Through its technical expertise on gender equality and the empowerment of women, UN-Women makes available evidence of the different situation of women and men and of discrimination against women, thereby helping to build momentum for greater attention to gender equality issues in the range of topics discussed in intergovernmental forums.

V. Integrating a gender perspective into intergovernmental processes, including the post-2015 development agenda: the role of UN-Women

51. During 2013, UN-Women built upon the foundations laid in previous years of engagement with a range of intergovernmental processes, and dedicated particular effort towards sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda, climate change and small island developing States. Galvanized by this expanded support by the Entity, gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls received increased attention in such processes, resulting in significant improvements in the global normative framework.

52. Efforts to accelerate action towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals gained further momentum from a special event convened by the President of the General Assembly to review progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, on 25 September 2013. In resolution 68/6, Member States identified areas for key interventions, including with regard to ending poverty and hunger, universal access to primary education, child mortality, universal access to reproductive health, including maternal health, environmental sustainability and access to water and sanitation. The same event was also a stepping stone towards the

post-2015 development agenda, with Member States recognizing the intrinsic interlinkage between poverty eradication and sustainable development and underlining the need for a coherent approach to work towards a single universal framework and set of goals, applicable to all countries, which should also promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all. Member States launched a road map, which will culminate in a summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, to be held in September 2015.

53. UN-Women further intensified its contribution to the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals by providing technical support to Member States and contributing to United Nations system-wide efforts through the technical support team. The Entity focused especially on a goal on the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their human rights, and on enhancing gender perspectives across the entire range of focus areas under discussion within the Open Working Group. UN-Women presented six priority target areas that address specific structural barriers which are holding back progress for women and girls: (1) ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls in laws, policies and practices; (2) ending all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces, including child, early and forced marriage; (3) realizing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and adolescent girls throughout the life cycle; (4) recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work through shared responsibility between households, and between households and the State, through the provision of social services and infrastructure; (5) ensuring women's equal rights to: inheritance; access, control and own assets and productive resources, including land; access to and management of natural resources; and access to essential services and infrastructure; and (6) ensuring full, equal and effective participation and leadership of women in decision-making in the public and private spheres and in peace processes and transitional justice. At the same time, UN-Women made the case for gender-specific targets on means of implementation, including the collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by sex and age for all targets across the framework, renewed investment in gender statistics and statistical capacity-building and gender-responsive financing for sustainable development. The Open Working Group concluded its work on 19 July 2014 and proposed a goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

54. Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change continued discussions on the elements of a future universal climate change agreement, to be adopted in 2015. They are also considering decisions on climate change adaptation, mitigation, capacity-building, technology transfer and finance, among other issues. As all of these have important impacts on and consequences for women and girls, it is critical that gender equality perspectives be reflected in all decisions to be adopted.

55. The progress made by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in the past four years with regard to gender perspectives, especially in its decision 23/CP.18, adopted at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, on promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in negotiations relating to the Conference of the Parties and in the representation of parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or to the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention provides a solid basis for

informing more effective climate change policy that addresses equally the needs of women and men (see FCCC/CP/2012/8/Add.3). Most importantly, based on that decision, gender equality is now a standing agenda item at the annual meetings of the Conference of the Parties, providing a strong institutional foundation for further work. The decision also strengthened UN-Women involvement in such processes, and the Entity is helping to accelerate momentum by engaging with parties to the Convention and other stakeholders in the preparations for the twentieth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Peru in December 2014, on two key issues: to ensure that parties will provide guidance (for example, through a decision) on concrete follow-up actions regarding the implementation of decision 23/CP.18 and the conclusions of the mandated in-session workshop, held at the nineteenth session of the Conference; and to encourage reflection of gender perspectives in the discussions of parties as they elaborate a new climate change agreement, to be adopted in 2015. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, under the leadership of UN-Women, has also been singled out for recognition as an accountability framework for the United Nations system in mainstreaming gender equality and enhancing the gender expertise of staff of United Nations entities, including the secretariat of the Convention.

56. The work of UN-Women is expected to receive additional traction through the Leaders' Forum on Women Leading the Way: Raising Ambition for Climate Action, a high-level event the Entity is co-organizing with the Mary Robinson Foundation — Climate Justice, on 22 September 2014. The key messages from this multi-stakeholder event will inform the Climate Summit to be convened by the Secretary-General, on 23 September 2014.

57. UN-Women strengthened its engagement with the preparatory process for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in Apia in September 2014. This engagement benefits from the experience and expertise of the Entity's multi-country offices in the Pacific and the Caribbean, as well as collaboration with civil society through the women's major group. UN-Women brought greater attention to gender equality issues through its contributions to issues briefs prepared by the United Nations system, and interventions at the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. The Entity provided technical comments to the draft outcome document (A/CONF.223/3, annex) on issues relating to the transformative effect of gender equality and women's empowerment on sustainable development; the integration of a gender perspective in priority areas including women's economic empowerment; ending all forms of violence against women and girls; ensuring women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership in decision-making, guaranteeing equal access to good-quality education and health care; addressing the structural and socioeconomic inequalities and multiple intersecting forms of discrimination that affect women and girls; and giving women equal rights with men to economic resources, including access to, ownership of and control over land and other forms of property, credit and appropriate new technologies.

58. As other intergovernmental processes are being initiated or are accelerating, UN-Women is actively reaching out to stakeholders and providing the evidence to bring greater attention to gender equality issues. Among those are, in particular, the preparatory processes for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the second United

Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, and the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

59. **Intergovernmental bodies are making progress in reflecting, in a more systematic manner, a gender perspective in their work. However, progress remains uneven across the different bodies. Resolutions of the General Assembly that included a gender perspective showed a solid upward trend, and those with a high focus on gender equality increased significantly. On the other hand, those adopted by the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions registered a downward trend. A gender perspective is still too seldom reflected in some areas of work, in particular in resolutions dealing with disarmament and related international security questions, political issues and decolonization, administrative and budgetary matters, international legal matters, crime prevention and criminal justice, and narcotic drugs. Targeted resolutions remain essential to further strengthen and deepen the global normative framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women. It is equally important, however, to mainstream a gender perspective into resolutions dealing with all other subject matters and thus integrate gender equality considerations as a cross-cutting issue in all areas under discussion.**

60. **A number of important intergovernmental processes are currently under way, including those on the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and the development of a new climate agreement, at a time when Member States are also conducting the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. These processes are closely related and will influence global and national policies on a wide range of issues, for years to come. It is therefore critical that these intergovernmental processes fully address gender perspectives so that women as well as men can benefit from their outcomes, and that inequality and discrimination against women is not perpetuated. Women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership at all levels is an important factor that can contribute to such outcomes.**

61. **While the percentage of reports of the Secretary-General reflecting a gender perspective to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly decreased very slightly, there was a significant increase in the number of reports to the functional commissions of the Council that considered gender equality issues. Although reports to the General Assembly had stronger gender analysis than in the previous session, their conclusions and recommendations do not yet systematically integrate a gender perspective.**

62. **The General Assembly may wish to:**

(a) **Reaffirm the relevance of gender mainstreaming, as a globally accepted strategy for promoting the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality, in all issues considered by its Main Committees and subsidiary bodies;**

(b) **Reiterate its call upon all intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under**

their consideration and within their mandates, as well as in all United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions and their follow-up processes;

(c) Call upon States to ensure that intergovernmental processes, such as the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) consistently address gender perspectives in their preparatory processes and outcomes; and also call upon States to ensure reflection of gender perspectives in the discussions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as they elaborate a new climate change agreement, to be adopted in 2015;

(d) Urge the Economic and Social Council and especially its functional commissions to intensify efforts to integrate gender perspectives into their work, noting in particular the lack of progress by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs;

(e) Welcome the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls among the sustainable development goals, and ensure that gender equality, women's human rights and the empowerment of women are reflected in the post-2015 development agenda and that gender-sensitive targets and indicators are integrated into all goals of any new development framework;

(f) Call upon Governments and all stakeholders to continue to use national and regional preparations for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to identify and strengthen opportunities for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all sectors and in all areas of development, including in the elaboration of the post-2015 development framework;

(g) Request that reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies systematically address gender perspectives through the provision of data disaggregated by sex and age and gender analysis, and that conclusions and recommendations for further action address the situation and needs of women, girls, men and boys, so as to facilitate gender-responsive policy development;

(h) Encourage UN-Women to continue to raise awareness about opportunities to mainstream a gender perspective into the work of intergovernmental bodies and processes and provide technical assistance, at the request of Member States, on strengthening the gender perspective in resolutions and other outcomes of intergovernmental bodies.

United Nations A/69/183

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 July 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session
Item 26 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Social development: literacy for life: shaping future agendas

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on literacy for life: shaping future agendas

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on literacy for life: shaping future agendas, submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 68/132.

* A/69/150.

14-58169 (E) 180814

Please recycle

Literacy for life: shaping future agendas

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/132 adopted on 18 December 2013, in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to reinforce its coordinating and catalysing role in the fight against illiteracy and to continue the process of elaborating a literacy vision and agenda for the period subsequent to the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), in consultation with Member States and development partners, in order to ensure a successful global multi-stakeholder partnership. It also requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report on the implementation of resolution 68/132.

While substantial progress has been made, improving global literacy remains an enduring challenge, and the final evaluation of the United Nations Literacy Decade suggests that UNESCO should continue to play its catalytic and coordinating role at the global level to advance the literacy agenda. While continuing its activities to support national efforts and advocate for the inclusion of literacy as a target in the post-2015 global development agenda, five strategic axes are proposed to scale up literacy action worldwide following the Decade, including through a country-driven, community-owned and collaborative multi-stakeholder partnership.

I. Introduction

Call by the General Assembly for collaborative, multi-pronged action

1. The General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, commended the efforts made by Member States, development partners, the international donor community, the private sector, civil society and the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, including the lead organization of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), UNESCO, in making progress on the goals of the Decade, but also expressed deep concern that the world is facing a challenging unfinished literacy agenda. It outlined the vision of an inclusive, literate world in which all people have access to education in their own languages, where gender gaps are bridged, and where all children, young people and adults, including marginalized groups, have access to good quality education.

2. Through its resolution 68/132, the General Assembly adopted a holistic view of literacy and affirmed its conviction that literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, young person and adult of the essential life skills that will enable them to address the challenges that they may face in life and represents an essential condition of lifelong learning, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the knowledge societies and economies of the twenty-first century.

3. In the same resolution, the General Assembly recognized the importance of continuing to implement national programmes and measures to eliminate illiteracy worldwide and requested UNESCO to reinforce its coordinating and catalysing role in the fight against illiteracy. The Assembly also encouraged the Director-General of UNESCO to continue the process of elaborating a literacy vision and agenda for the period subsequent to the United Nations Literacy Decade, in consultation with Member States and development partners. Furthermore, it recognized the need to give appropriate consideration to the issue of literacy in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

4. The present report presents five strategic axes of action for literacy in the period subsequent to the Decade.

II. Sustaining and expanding the gains of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012)

A. United Nations Literacy Decade: an expanded vision of literacy

5. The United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), proclaimed at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly in 2001 to support collective efforts to achieve the Education for All literacy goal, ended on 31 December 2012. The evaluation of the Decade highlighted its catalytic effect as a global framework for focused efforts for the promotion of literacy and literate environments. The Decade advanced an expanded vision of literacy as a foundation for further learning across the lifespan and underscored its importance as a development imperative. Throughout the Decade, a multisectoral approach to literacy was reinforced through focused attention on such themes as literacy and gender, literacy and sustainable development, literacy and health, literacy and empowerment, literacy and peace, and literacy and livelihoods. Literacy is now seen as a continuum of skill levels, from

basic to advanced, acquired throughout a lifespan, as opposed to being defined in terms of a simple dichotomy of "literacy" versus "illiteracy".

6. Basic literacy skills, comprising reading, writing and computing, are the foundational skills for effective functioning in today's text-mediated knowledge societies. UNESCO adopts an integrated and holistic approach to literacy, recognizing that its acquisition and development takes place before, during and after basic education, as well as out of school through formal, non-formal and informal learning. Literacy is a life-wide and lifelong learning process. It is a continuum of different levels of literacy, with the required minimum level of basic skills varying with the life context of individuals. Without these fundamental skills, people are at risk of being excluded from new and emerging possibilities to use information and communication technologies and other media for different purposes and to make informed life choices.

7. Notions of what constitutes a minimum threshold of functional literacy are changing as a result of progress in science and technology and the development of what have become known as "knowledge societies". Skills associated with the use of new digital media in our everyday lives are evolving and becoming more complex. This requires a broader approach to literacy and numeracy that includes a set of capabilities or key competences required in the information and digital age, and appropriate means of measuring these skill or competency levels.

B. Steady but uneven progress: an unfinished agenda

8. There has been steady progress in the global literacy landscape. Global literacy rates for those aged 15 to 24 years increased from 83 per cent in 1990 to 87 per cent in 2000 and 89 per cent in 2012. More adults aged 15 years and older are literate than previously, resulting in an increase from 76 per cent in 1990 to 82 per cent in 2000 and 84 per cent in 2012. The absolute number of non-literate adults fell from 884 million in 1990 to 787 million in 2000 and 781 million in 2012. However, this progress has been uneven across regions and countries. Three quarters of the world's non-literate adult population live in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, women still constitute two thirds of the world's non-literate population, a proportion that has remained unchanged over the past 20 years.

9. Literacy challenges are not limited to the developing countries; low literacy skills are also a concern in many high-income countries. The European Commission, for example, notes that in Europe an estimated 20 per cent of adults lack the literacy skills they need to function fully in a modern society.[1] Even in countries that have high literacy rates, there are regions or population groups that have inadequate levels of literacy. For instance, in countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), between 4.9 per cent and 27.7 per cent of adults are proficient at only the lowest levels in literacy and 8.1 per cent to 31.7 per cent are proficient at only the lowest levels in numeracy.[2]

10. Based on current trends, 751 million adults, including 103 million young people aged 15 to 24 years, will lack basic literacy skills in 2015. Only 36 countries and territories are likely to reach or exceed Education for All goal 4 (Achieving a

[1] See http://euskillspanorama.ec.europa.eu.

[2] See http://skills.oecd.org/documents/OECD_Skills_Outlook_2013.pdf.

50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults).

11. Inefficient school systems add a critical dimension to the global literacy challenge. Some 58 million children of primary school age and 63 million children of lower secondary school age were out of school in 2012.[3] Furthermore, an estimated 250 million children of primary school age, nearly half of whom do not reach grade four, are not acquiring basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics,[4] adding to the existing pool of the non-literate population.

12. Clearly, literacy is a truly global challenge and a huge unfinished agenda that must be urgently addressed. In today's text-mediated knowledge economies, lacking literacy skills is a grim denial of the right to basic education and results in the severe marginalization of large population groups, especially women. Addressing the multiple literacy needs of all age groups must remain a sustainable international commitment. As the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative recognizes, "Inequality is at the heart of the global education emergency. If we do not act swiftly, educational disparities will become an even greater source of division — both within and between countries".[5] A literate world is, in many ways, one of the first steps towards a peaceful, inclusive, sustainable world. Given the determining role that literacy and numeracy play in increasing the life chances of individuals, improving family welfare and contributing to the development of nations, UNESCO believes that the uneven progress in improving youth and adult literacy, especially for women, represents huge missed opportunities at all levels of society.

C. Five factors affecting the achievement of literacy and literate environments

13. UNESCO recognizes at least five key factors that must be addressed to achieve the goal of attaining quality literacy for all as a foundation for lifelong learning, with the ultimate goal of creating a fully literate world.

14. First, literacy is not adequately integrated into sector-wide and multisectoral education and development strategies. As a result, attention, action and fund flows within countries and from the development partners to literacy are largely inadequate.

15. Second, quality literacy programmes must be scaled up comprehensively and innovatively in order to address the literacy needs of diverse populations. Promoting the participation of communities and learners in all aspects of literacy provision, professionalizing literacy providers and managers, producing quality literacy materials, developing quality indicators for literacy and using information and communication technologies would accelerate the pace and quality of progress.

[3] See http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/oosc-2014-progress-stalled-on-reaching-upe.aspx.

[4] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14: Teaching and Learning: Achieving quality for all* (2014). See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf.

[5] See http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/files/GEFI_Brochure_ENG.pdf.

16. Third, owing to their often poor quality, many education systems continue to "graduate" learners who have not acquired sustainable literacy skills. As indicated in paragraph 11 above, in addition to the 121 million out-of-school children, 250 million learners, nearly half of whom do not reach grade four, are failing to acquire the basics in primary school.

17. Fourth, weak literate environments fail to reinforce basic literacy skills acquired through diverse pathways. The use of literacy skills should be nurtured in all significant contexts, including the family, schools, communities and workplaces, and for different purposes. Developing literacy-rich environments and a literate culture, particularly in multilingual contexts, would help to create a more inclusive and sustainable literate world.

18. Fifth, women's literacy is an issue of high concern. The active participation of women in designing, implementing and assessing programmes needs to be promoted. Literacy must be associated with empowerment through the promotion of women's legal rights and income-generation activities.

III. Five strategic axes to shape a new agenda

19. UNESCO will continue to play the catalytic role it has played over the past six decades. Through its vision of fundamental education (adopted by UNESCO at the first session of its General Conference in 1947), its experimental world literacy programme (UNESCO programme in the late 1960s and early 1970s) and its leading role at the global education summits held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and in Dakar in 2000, it has been a champion of literacy. As lead coordinator of the United Nations Literacy Decade, it has drawn the attention of countries and regions around the world to the transformative potential of literacy. In order to accelerate the pace of progress, the organization launched the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment 2006-2015 targeting 36 countries. The UNESCO literacy assessment and monitoring programme helped to create an improved understanding of literacy levels in diverse settings.

20. Through the Belém Framework for Action adopted in 2009 at the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education, Member States have committed to redouble efforts to meet Education for All goal 4. Recently, the High-level International Round Table on Literacy (Paris, September, 2012) and the colloquium on advancing towards a literate twenty-first century (Paris, September 2013), both held at UNESCO, have spurred reinforced commitment.

21. Five strategic axes, building on past and recent initiatives and taking into consideration the emerging challenges, are proposed for the global literacy agenda in the period subsequent to the Decade:

- Developing the capacities of Member States in the areas of policies, programme delivery and literacy assessments
- Scaling up literacy actions for girls and women
- Reinforcing innovative modes of literacy delivery, including through the use of information and communication technologies
- Expanding the knowledge base and monitoring and evaluation

- Advocating for literacy on the global agenda and ensuring synergies between different actions, including through a multi-stakeholder partnership and networks.

A. Developing the capacities of Member States in the areas of policies, programme delivery and literacy assessments

22. Following up on the Paris communiqué on scaling up literacy that came out of the High-level International Round Table on Literacy (2012), 36 countries have demonstrated their commitment to scaling up literacy programmes. UNESCO will continue to work with these countries to consolidate and expand the gains already made.

23. Part of this work relates to policy development and ensuring that literacy is integrated into sector-wide and multisectoral education and development strategies. Over the past few years, UNESCO has supported a number of sub-Saharan African countries, including Chad, Rwanda and South Sudan, to integrate literacy and non-formal education into the education sector and national development plans. Similarly, in Asia and the Pacific, national literacy action plans that respond to current literacy challenges have been developed, with support from UNESCO, in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Iraq, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. Countries in the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean have also been supported. UNESCO will continue to assist countries to review their education policies and develop appropriate policy instruments and strategies to better address the educational needs of diverse population groups. Through its programme on capacity development for education for all, UNESCO is currently supporting 11 countries through major literacy capacity development interventions. With the financial support of donors, UNESCO will continue to scale up these actions and give particular focus to the design and implementation of literacy and non-formal education policies, strategies and programmes. Examples of achievements to date include support to Nigeria's efforts to revitalize youth and adult literacy programmes, the use of evidence-based planning to develop the three-year Country Literacy Acceleration Plan complemented by provincial literacy acceleration plans in Cambodia and the revision or development of national literacy strategies in Mauritania, Rwanda and South Sudan.

24. In addition to national interventions, UNESCO will continue to support international literacy policy forums such as the one organized in 2013 with the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture on literacy and life skills education for vulnerable youth through community learning centres, at which more than 120 government officials, youth representatives and civil society stakeholders from 17 countries shared their experiences in implementing effective practices.

25. Building on the achievements of past technical support provided by UNESCO and its Institute for Lifelong Learning in over 40 countries, UNESCO will continue to engage with countries to enhance the competence of literacy instructors, develop curricular frameworks, improve the management and monitoring of literacy programmes and transform community learning centres and other community-based institutions into hubs of lifelong learning. UNESCO will, for example, continue to support the Government of Afghanistan in implementing the programme for the enhancement of literacy in Afghanistan, which currently provides literacy education

to 640,000 non-literate youth and adults in 18 provinces, 60 per cent of whom are women. In addition, it will continue to support the Government in implementing the programme on literacy for empowering the Afghan police, which is aimed at ensuring the quality of existing police literacy classes through institutional capacity-building of the Literacy Unit of the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

26. Seven Arab States[6] are implementing literacy and non-formal education programmes through an array of contextually appropriate strategies. In 2013, a regional centre for literacy and adult education was established in Egypt as a UNESCO category 2 centre to provide resource support to countries in the region. The "Literacy enhancement Arab programme" was developed in 2012 as a platform for Arab States to share experiences and develop joint programmes, and UNESCO will continue to support regional cooperation in this field.

27. Following up on work already undertaken in several countries (such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chad, Mauritania, Nepal and Rwanda), UNESCO will continue to work on increasing the availability of reliable data and enhancing capacities to manage non-formal education management information systems or integrated education management information systems.

28. Within the framework of the fellowship and scholarship programmes of the International Conference on Adult Education organized by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, UNESCO will continue to train senior adult education experts to enhance the implementation of the Belém Framework for Action in their countries and encourage knowledge transfer in their respective countries and contexts.

29. UNESCO will continue to assist Member States to develop reliable measures of literacy and generate data that are comparable across time and disaggregated by age, sex, disability, socioeconomic status and other relevant factors, drawing upon the expertise of the UNESCO Institutes, UNESCO chairs and networks and expert practitioners. In particular, UNESCO will continue to support countries to improve literacy assessments. A number of such initiatives have already been implemented, most notably through the first phase of the literacy assessment and monitoring programme implemented in Jordan, Mongolia, Paraguay and the State of Palestine; through the programme "Action research measuring learning outcomes of adult literacy programmes", which is supporting countries to develop culturally and linguistically sensitive measurement instruments in Burkina Faso, Mali, Morocco, the Niger and Senegal; and the Pacific islands literacy and numeracy assessment, conducted in 14 Pacific island States and territories.

B. Scaling up literacy actions for girls and women

30. Increased attention must be given to scaling up literacy for girls and women. The level of female adult illiteracy has remained unchanged over the past two decades at 64 per cent. 496 million of the world's adult illiterate population. In 68 countries with data, the poorest young women are projected to achieve universal literacy only in 2072.[4] UNESCO will therefore continue to strengthen advocacy for the education of girls and women, build strategic partnerships, fundraise and implement targeted programmes for girls and women.

[6] Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and Yemen.

31. In 2011, UNESCO launched the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education, known as "Better Life, Better Future", with the support of world leaders such as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh and former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, guided by the conviction that educating girls and women can break the cycle of poverty and foster greater social justice. The Partnership seeks to increase learning opportunities for adolescent girls and women and to find solutions to some of the deep-rooted challenges and obstacles to their education. Particular emphasis is given to expanding and improving the quality of education for girls and women at the secondary level and in the area of literacy, taking successful initiatives to scale and replicating good practice.

32. Under this initiative, UNESCO has established dynamic partnerships to support marginalized girls and women in Africa and Asia. Important partners have joined the Partnership since it was launched and the number continues to grow. These include the Governments of Italy, Japan, Pakistan and the United States of America, the Varkey GEMS Foundation, Hainan Airlines, Nokia, the Packard Foundation, Procter & Gamble and the Barefoot College. UNESCO will continue to expand and strengthen its network of partners. One example is its Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education, which was established in December 2012 and is aimed at expanding access for girls to education by improving the quality and relevance of basic education and strengthening policy implementation at the national, provincial and community levels, thus ensuring the right to quality basic education and safe learning environments.

33. An example of the organization's operational work under the global partnership is the UNESCO literacy project for girls and women in Senegal. This project has adopted an array of innovative teaching methods and has successfully implemented literacy courses through mobile phones, computers, the Internet and television that, coupled with vocational skills training, have proved effective in reaching out to non-literate and neo-literate women. It is a partnership between the Government of Senegal, UNESCO and the multinational private sector company Procter & Gamble. Launched in January 2012, the project is aimed at improving access to education for 40,000 neo-literate and illiterate women aged 15 to 55 years in Senegal. Based on the success of the project in Senegal, a similar literacy project was launched in Nigeria in March 2014; it is aimed at benefiting 60,000 girls and women in the Federal Capital Territory and Rivers State within the next three years.

C. Reinforcing innovative modes of literacy delivery, including through the use of information and communication technologies

34. As information and communication technologies become more accessible and affordable, mobile technology is increasingly common in areas where women are underserved and education is scarce. Current estimates from the United Nations indicate that 6 billion out of the 7 billion people living today have access to a working mobile phone (International Telecommunication Union, 2012). UNESCO believes that, although it is not a panacea, mobile technology offers a promising vehicle for improving education, in terms of both access and quality. Experiences in countries such as Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan and Senegal show that mobile phones could open innovative possibilities for reaching unreached populations. In those countries, literacy programmes and teacher training were facilitated by mobile

phones. A 2014 UNESCO study, "Reading in the mobile era", shows that in countries with high illiteracy rates, where people often suffer from a lack of readily available reading materials, those with literacy skills often read books and stories from small screen devices, pointing to the potential for mobile learning even in remote and poor areas.

35. UNESCO has been drawing on effective practices for mobilizing the potential of mobile technologies in breaking through the economic and cultural barriers to literacy education for women and girls. Nine in-depth case studies across four regions that analyse enablers for the successful use of mobile technologies in advancing literacy education for women and girls have been completed. UNESCO has been working with Governments, local community centres and the private sector to build mobile learning systems that make literacy programmes accessible on a large scale by out-of-school children and adults through mobile phones. Mobile learning systems also enable flexible learning by adults, who are able to access it at any time the learners are available and anywhere they feel safe and comfortable. UNESCO has developed mobile literacy programmes in Myanmar, Nigeria and Thailand and is expanding them to more countries.

36. Every year since 2012, UNESCO organizes Mobile Learning Week, a flagship UNESCO conference on mobile technologies and education. In 2013, literacy was one of the themes of Mobile Learning Week. In partnership with major international technology companies, UNESCO brought together more than 700 participants representing a diverse group of stakeholders from over 60 countries to consider how affordable and widespread mobile technologies can advance education. For Mobile Learning Week 2015, UNESCO will partner with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), convening stakeholders to share effective practices in using mobile devices to empower women and girls. This overarching theme will be underscored by four sub-themes: equitable access to mobile technologies, gender-sensitive pedagogy, mobile literacy education, and skills development through mobiles.

37. Open and distance learning, drawing on the availability of cloud computing, mobile technologies and user-generated local language content, could be useful in making quality literacy learning more accessible and contextually relevant.

38. Furthermore, UNESCO will reinforce its partnership with the Hewlett Foundation, the Commonwealth of Learning and other stakeholders to catalyse the process of developing and deploying online open educational resources and courseware to enable countries to scale up literacy programmes.

D. Expanding the knowledge base and monitoring and evaluation

39. As the clearinghouse for literacy, UNESCO will gather, transfer, disseminate and share available information, knowledge and effective practices in the field of literacy, as well as identify and pilot innovative approaches. It will advocate for the strengthening of literate environments to sustain initial literacy and support the vision of literacy as a continuum. UNESCO, in particular through its specialized entities such as the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, will, for example, continue to share the knowledge base on effective literacy policies and programmes. Through the literacy and basic skills mailing list managed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, news and

research evidence related to the field are currently being disseminated to almost 700 subscribers.

40. UNESCO will seek to expand the database on effective literacy and numeracy practices,[7] which already contains more than 170 case studies from all regions. Recent publications include *Literacy Programmes with a focus on women to reduce gender disparities*;[8] a study on successful approaches to reducing gender disparities in and through literacy; four policy briefs[9] on the status of literacy teachers; literacy and life skills for youth; empowering literacy programmes for women; and community-based provision for young people; as well as *Sustaining Literacy in Africa: Developing a Literate Environment*. UNESCO will continue to produce policy briefs with key messages for policymakers and decision-makers based on good practices and lessons learned.

41. Departing from the business-as-usual approach, UNESCO will seek and promote cutting-edge innovative solutions to increase access to relevant and functional literacy skills education required for the citizens of the twenty-first century. It will build a community of practitioners focused on creating, delivering and monitoring literacy learning, including through strengthened partnerships.

42. Since 1967, nearly 460 effective practices displaying outstanding merit in increasing literacy levels and contributing to creating literate environments have been awarded the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes. Through the two international literacy prizes awarded annually (the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize and the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy), the organization collects good practices in literacy and documents information on the winning programmes. UNESCO will continue to award these international prizes and disseminate good practices throughout the global literacy and education community.

43. The second *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* is a key instrument assessing progress in the worldwide International Conference on Adult Education follow-up process. The report, entitled *Rethinking Literacy*, was produced in 2013[10] on the basis of national reports from 139 Member States. The second *Global Report* was launched globally and in all regions, in cooperation with the International Council for Adult Education and with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. In view of the social, environmental, demographic and economic challenges of the twenty-first century, the second *Global Report* underscores the indispensable need for continuous learning, with literacy as its critical foundation. It recommends building bridges between policy and research, improving governance by involving all relevant actors, building capacities for coordination and decentralized implementation, innovative strategies for mobilizing resources, designing monitoring frameworks and instituting professionalization.

44. UNESCO will support Member States in monitoring and evaluating literacy policies and programmes against agreed priorities and targets and in developing appropriate indicators for measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of policies and programmes. UNESCO will also support Member States in continuously improving

[7] See http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/.

[8] See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002225/222588e.pdf.

[9] See http://uil.unesco.org/home/programme-areas/literacy-and-basic-skills/.

[10] See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002224/222407E.pdf.

methodologies and mechanisms for the collection and analysis of relevant literacy data and ensure coherence between national data collection and international standards and initiatives. Particular focus will be placed on institutional capacities for the use of information from monitoring and evaluation to inform strategies and programmes, standards and curriculums or to adjust learning methods.

E. Advocating for literacy on the global agenda and ensuring synergies between different actions, including through a multi-stakeholder partnership and networks

45. UNESCO will continue to build political commitment and engage all key stakeholders to make progress on improving literacy rates around the world, especially in countries that are at risk of not achieving the internationally agreed goals.

46. The UNESCO position paper on the post-2015 education agenda[11] identifies literacy as a priority area that enables individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and wider society. Building upon this, the Education for All Steering Committee, a representative body of key international education stakeholders convened by UNESCO, has developed a comprehensive new vision for education beyond 2015.

47. In the Muscat Agreement, which was adopted by over 250 delegates at the Global Education for All Meeting held in Muscat, Oman from 12 to 14 May 2014, education leaders endorsed a shared vision of a future education agenda, outlining an overarching goal and a set of seven global targets for education post-2015. The following literacy target was proposed: "By 2030, all youth and at least x% of adults reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to fully participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women and the most marginalized."

48. Moreover, civil society organizations added their weight to the new education agenda by voicing their support for the proposed education goal and draft targets at the meeting of the UNESCO Collective Consultation of Non-governmental Organizations on Education for All (Santiago de Chile, 21 to 23 May 2014). The group, representing some 300 organizations from all over the world, also pledged to continue mobilizing support and increasing advocacy for education both from within and outside of the education community.

49. The proposed targets will be the basis of a framework for action, to be developed by UNESCO in consultation with all Education for All partners. The framework will guide the implementation of a future education agenda and identify both indicators for the global targets and country-specific targets and indicators, reflecting diverse social, political, economic and cultural contexts.

50. In order to accelerate the pace and make a tangible difference to literacy levels across the world, it is evident that the "business as usual" approach will not work, nor can UNESCO achieve results without multi-stakeholder strategic partnerships.

51. To this end, UNESCO intends to consult Member States further on the establishment of a global partnership on literacy as part of the global education

[11] See http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED_new/UNESCOPosition PaperOnEDpost-2015.pdf.

movement. The two main objectives of the partnership would be to (a) improve literacy outcomes in countries through collaborative action networks at the international, regional, national and local levels; and (b) integrate literacy learning within a national institutional framework for lifelong learning opportunities.

52. The partnership will involve different types of stakeholders (such as countries, the private sector, foundations and civil society) that wish to prioritize literacy as a key development imperative and are willing to work collaboratively to find systemic solutions to work towards building inclusive and sustainable communities through enhancing literacy and lifelong learning opportunities. It will also build upon existing initiatives such as the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative, where different stakeholders such as Member States, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies and the private sector are working together to put children in school and improving quality of learning. The partners[12] will be encouraged to make commitments relating to policy reform, financial allocation, advocacy, service and product delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and/or research and innovation.

53. UNESCO will provide a convening platform for policy dialogue and for sharing national commitments, strategies, programmes and outcomes, analyse promising practices and provide solutions-oriented guidance. In sum, UNESCO will use its long-standing experience and commitment to literacy to lead, support and sustain the multi-stakeholder partnership that will help make new and demonstrable gains in the coming years.

54. UNESCO will support countries to generate evidence on the intrinsic and instrumental value of literacy and encourage them to give due consideration to literacy in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda and its inclusion as one of the key goals in the global education and development agenda.

IV. Recommendations

55. **Based on the present report, the following recommendations may be considered by the General Assembly:**

(a) **Recognize literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning as well as a building block for achieving basic human rights and sustainable development;**

(b) **Encourage Governments to seek innovative solutions to accelerate literacy efforts and create institutional frameworks and systems for literacy and lifelong learning, and translate political commitment into dependable financing, robust programming and improvement-oriented monitoring;**

(c) **Call upon countries, development partners, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and civil society to promote literacy and literate environments;**

(d) **Express its support to the five strategic axes proposed for the global literacy agenda;**

[12] Member State government agencies and representatives, United Nations and other multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, regional organizations, UNESCO chairs, non-governmental organizations, private sector and private foundations, experts (for example, universities, research institutes and think tanks) and other civil society organizations.

(e) **Urge countries to consider integrating literacy into the post-2015 global development and education agenda as an education and development imperative;**

(f) **Encourage UNESCO to continue to strengthen its role in coordinating and catalysing global efforts towards scaling up literacy in the period subsequent to the United Nations Literacy Decade.**